

Union with Christ? Re-reading Calvin as Constructive Proposal for Korean Calvin Reception

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“I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.”

Galatians 2:20 (own emphasis.)

“And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever — the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you... On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you.”

John 14: 16-17, 20 (own emphasis.)

“Grant, Almighty God, that as thou hast favoured us with so singular a benefit as to make through thy Son a covenant which has been ratified for our salvation,—O grant, that we may become partakers of it, and know that thou so speakest with us, that thou not only shewest by thy Word what is right, but speakest also to us inwardly by thy Spirit, and thus renderest us teachable and obedient, that there may be an evidence of our adoption, and a proof that thou wilt govern and rule us, until we shall at length be really and fully united the thee(Almighty God) through Christ our Lord.—Amen.”

John Calvin’s Prayer (*Comm.* on Jer. 31:34) (own emphasis.)

DECLARATION

I, Sung Rual Choi, hereby declare that the work contained in this dissertation is my own original work and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it at any university for a degree.

Signature:

Date: 14th April, 2015

ABSTRACT

The starting point of this dissertation is the presence of a theological deficit regarding the reception of Calvin's "union with Christ (*unio cum Christo*)" thought. It is argued that the notion of "union with Christ" should not be treated merely as a doctrinal theme within soteriology and the doctrine of the Sacraments but as having an inter-relationship with various other important doctrines in Calvin's theology, thus functioning as a core thought.

Hence this dissertation re-interprets and re-evaluates the original scope, content and meaning of Calvin's use of the notion of "union with Christ," attending in the process to the various metaphorical expressions and theological meanings associated with this notion.

This research dissertation attempted to recover the importance of what is described as Calvin's "union with Christ" thought in the following manner. Firstly, it examines the main causes for the reduction of the scope and importance of "union with Christ" thought in Korean Reformed theology and the American Reformed theology (or Calvinistic theology) that influenced it.

Secondly, it also examines more concretely the various metaphorical expressions and theological meanings associated with "union with Christ" thought. Lastly, the study strives to verify systematically that the "union with Christ" thought (or 'union with the Triune God' thought) functions as a core thought in Calvin's theology. This is done through the explication of the close inter-relationship between the structure of the *Institutes* and "union with Christ" thought, as well as by indicating the way in which "union with Christ" thought is interrelated with other important doctrines in Calvin's theology.

OPSOMMING

Die vertrekpunt van hierdie verhandeling is die stelling dat daar in gereformeerde teologie 'n reduksie ten opsigte van Calvyn se gedagte van die *unio cum Christo* (die eenheid of vereniging met Christus) bestaan. Die studie argumenteer dat “eenheid met Christus” nie alleenlik as 'n leerstellige tema binne die soteriologie en die leerstelling oor die sakramente in Calvyn se teologie beskou moet word nie, maar dat die interrelasie van hierdie tema met ander belangrike leerstellige temas deeglik en duidelik verreken moet word. “Eenheid met Christus” funksioneer dus as 'n kerngedagte in Calvyn se teologie.

Daarom herinterpreer en herevalueer hierdie proefskrif die oorspronklike reikwydte, inhoud en betekenis van Calvyn se gebruik van die “eenheid met Christus”-gedagte, en in die proses word onder meer in fyn besonderhede aan die onderskei metaforiese uitdrukkings en teologiese temas wat met hierdie gedagte gepaardgaan, aandag gegee.

Die navorsing poog in die proses om die belangrikheid van Calvyn se “eenheid met Christus”-gedagte te herontdek langs die volgende weë: Ten eerste word daar gekyk na die reduksie in reikwydte, betekenis en belangrikheid van Calvyn se “eenheid met Christus”-gedagte in Koreaanse gereformeerde teologie, sowel as in die Amerikaanse gereformeerde (of Calvinistiese) teologie wat so 'n groot impak daarop gehad het. In die tweede plek word daar heel konkreet en in groot detail na die onderskeie metaforiese uitdrukkings en teologiese betekenisse wat met die “eenheid met Christus”-gedagte geassosieer word, ondersoek ingestel. Derdens poog die studie om oortuigend op 'n sistematiese wyse aan te toon dat “eenheid met Christus” as 'n kerngedagte in Calvyn se teologie funksioneer. Dit word gedoen deur aan te toon dat daar 'n noue interrelasie tussen die struktuur van die *Institusie* en die “eenheid met Christus”-gedagte is, sowel as deur die noue interrelasie tussen hierdie gedagte en ander belangrike dogmatiese *loci* in Calvyn se teologie aan te dui.

To
My Most Gracious and Beloved God
and
My Mother, Soon Duck Cha, and My Wife, Seon Young Kim

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As I have wrestled with this research dissertation over the last few years, there has always been a verse from the Bible in my head: “I have been crucified with Christ and *I no longer live, but Christ lives in me*. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me” (Gal. 2:20). This is also a text that reflects the basis of the “union with Christ (*unio cum Christo*)” thought, which is the theme of this research. I have proceeded with this dissertation by depending on Scripture and the Holy Spirit, together with prayer and meditation on the Scriptures. As a consequence, I have experienced the grace of God in writing this research dissertation from the beginning to the end. I lift up all glory, praise and thanksgiving to the living God, before everything else.

The support of my family has been my solid prop during this time of research. How can I express my gratitude for all the great love and unceasing prayers of my aged mother, Soon Duck Cha (She is probably praying at the moment that I am writing this), and the ceaseless sacrifice and love of my beloved wife, Seon Young Kim? I offer endless thanks to my revered mother-in-law, Soon Im Gwak, who has prayed for and supported me. My deepest thanks must be given to my beloved sisters, Mi Sook Choi, Mi Ock Choi, and Mi Hwa Choi, who have supported and prayed for me ever since I was a child. I also want to thank very deeply my older brother, Sung Jin Choi, and my younger brother, Moses Choi, who have also supported and prayed for me since I was called by God.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	i
OPSOMMING	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vi
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	x

PART ONE

Korean-American Calvinistic Theology and Calvin's "Union with Christ" Thought	1
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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction	2
1.1. Background to the Research	2
1.2. Research Questions	9
1.3. Conceptual Clarification and Related Research	12
1.4. Research Methodology	17
1.5. Delimitation of the Research	19
1.6. Aims and Benefits of Research	21

CHAPTER TWO

Korean Reformed Theology and Calvin's "Union with Christ" Thought	23
2.1. The Reception of Calvinistic Theology in Korea and Calvin's "union with Christ" thought	25
2.1.1. The Early American Missionaries and Calvin's "Union with Christ" Thought	27
2.1.2. Dr. Hyung-Nong Park (1897-1978) and Calvin's "Union with Christ" Thought	30
2.1.3. Dr. Yune-Sun Park (1905-1988) and Calvin's "Union with Christ" Thought	33
2.1.4. Others Representative Korean Reformed Theologians and Calvin's "Union with Christ" Thought	35
2.2. The Theological Limitations of Calvin's "Union with Christ" Thought in Korean Reformed Theology	40
2.2.1. The Research Insufficiency with regard to Primary Sources	42
2.2.2. "Union with Christ" was Approached only as a Doctrine	46
2.2.3. A High Degree of Dependence on the American Calvinistic Theology	49

CHAPTER THREE

American Reformed Theology and Calvin's "Union with Christ" Thought	56
3.1. The Reception of Calvin's Theology in the U.S.A. and Calvin's "Union with Christ" Thought	58
3.1.1. The First Generation of American Calvinistic Theologians and Calvin's "Union with Christ" Thought	58

3.1.2. The Old Princeton Theologians and Calvin's "Union with Christ" Thought	61
3.1.3. Other Theologians and Calvin's "Union with Christ" Thought	64
3.2. The Theological Limitations and Causes of Calvin's "Union with Christ" Thought in American Reformed Theology	67
3.2.1. The Absence of Research on Primary Calvin Sources	68
3.2.2. Understanding Calvin's "Union with Christ" Thought as only a Doctrinal Aspect	69
3.2.3. Problematic Theological Interpretations of Calvin's "Union with Christ" thought	71
 PART TWO	
"Union with Christ" Thought in Calvin's Theology: The Metaphorical Expressions and Theological Meanings	77
 CHAPTER FOUR	
The Metaphorical Expressions of the Various Notions of Calvin's "Union with Christ" Thought	78
4.1. Various Aspects of the Comprehensiveness of Calvin's "Union with Christ" Thought	78
4.1.1. The Comprehensiveness of Various Metaphorical Expressions of the "Union with Christ" Thought	80
4.1.2. The Comprehensiveness of Various Theological Meanings of the "Union with Christ" Thought	81
4.1.3. The Volume of Work Contributes to the Comprehensiveness of the "Union with Christ" Thought	81
4.1.4. The Comprehensiveness of the Content of the "Union with Christ" Thought	82
4.2. Features of Calvin's "Union with Christ" Thought: The Various Metaphorical Expressions	86
4.2.1. Metaphorical Expressions of Relational Notions	87
4.2.1.1. Communion with Christ	87
4.2.1.2. Participation in Christ	89
4.2.1.3. Christ Joins Us with Him	91
4.2.2. Metaphorical Expressions of Union and Unitive Notions	92
4.2.2.1. We Become one with Christ	93
4.2.2.2. In Christ	95
4.2.2.3. Christ Dwells in Us	98
4.2.3. Metaphorical Expressions of Other Direct Biblical Notions	101
4.2.3.1. We Have Been Engrafted in Christ	104
4.2.3.2. Christ Becomes Our Head	106
4.2.4. Metaphorical Expressions of Socio-Cultural Notions	110
4.2.5. Metaphorical Expressions of Pneumatological-Mystical Notions	112
4.2.6. Metaphorical Expressions of Substantial Notions	114
4.2.7. Metaphorical Expressions of Effectual Notions	115
4.2.8. Metaphorical Expressions of Communality Notions	116
4.2.9. Metaphorical Expressions of Eschatological Notions	118

CHAPTER FIVE

The Theological Meanings of Calvin’s “Union with Christ” Thought	121
5.1. The Union by the Holy Spirit	123
5.1.1. Transcendental Union	124
5.1.2. Union with the Holy Spirit	126
5.2. Trinitarian Union	128
5.2.1. ‘Union with the One Person of the Triune God’	128
5.2.2. ‘Union with the Two Persons of the Triune God’	130
5.2.3. ‘Union with All Three Persons of the Triune God’	132
5.3. Union through Faith	133
5.3.1. The Original Direction of the Union	134
5.3.2. The Initiative of Union	135
5.4. Substantial Union (as a more comprehensive term)	138
5.4.1. Real Union	141
5.4.1.1. Eschatological Union	143
5.4.1.2. Effective Union	144
5.4.1.3. Covenantal Union	145
5.4.1.4. Union and the offices of Christ	146
5.4.2. Substantial Union (as a more concrete term)	148
5.4.2.1. Organic Union	149
5.4.2.2. Vital Union	149
5.4.2.3. Transformative Union and Creative Union	150
5.4.2.4. Essential Union	151
5.4.2.5. ‘Union with Christ’s Two Natures’ and ‘Integrated Union’	154
5.5. Spiritual Union (as a more comprehensive term)	155
5.5.1. Mystical Union	156
5.5.2. Spiritual Union (as a more concrete term)	158
5.5.3. The Unity of the Church	161
5.6. Other Theological Meanings	163
5.6.1. Sacramental Union	164
5.6.2. Holy Union	166
5.6.3. Indissoluble Union and Eternal Union	167

PART THREE

“Union with Christ” Thought and Calvin’s Theology: The Theological Structure and the Doctrinal Scope	169
---	-----

CHAPTER SIX

Theological Structure of the “Union with Christ” Thought and the <i>Institutes</i>	170
6.1. The Theological Structure of the “Union with Christ” Thought and the <i>Institutes</i>	171
6.1.1. The Structure of the <i>Institutes</i> from the viewpoint of the “Union with Christ” Thought	174
6.1.1.1. The Theological Twofold Structure of “Triune God” and “Ourselves” from the viewpoint of the “Union with Christ” Thought	177
6.1.1.2. The Theological Structure and Scope of the ‘Union with the Triune God’ Thought	184

CHAPTER SEVEN

The Doctrinal Scope of the “Union with Christ” Thought in Calvin’s Theology

7.1. The “Union with Christ” Thought and the Central Thought of Calvin’s Theology	191
7.1.1. The Issue of ‘Central Doctrine’ or ‘Central Thought’ in Calvin’s Theology	192
7.1.2. The Importance of the “Union with Christ” Thought in Calvin’s Theology	193
7.1.2.1. The Importance of “Union with Christ” in Soteriology	197
7.1.2.2. The Importance of “Union with Christ” and the Good News of the Gospel	197
7.1.2.3. The Importance of the “Union with Christ” as a Central Doctrine of Calvin’s Theology	199
7.2. The Doctrinal Scope of the “Union with Christ” Thought in the <i>Institutes</i>	203
7.2.1. Various Doctrines Connected to the “Union with Christ” Thought	206
7.2.1.1. The Doctrine of Revelation	206
7.2.1.2. The Doctrine of God	207
7.2.1.3. The Doctrine of the Triune God	209
7.2.1.4. Christology	213
7.2.1.5. Anthropology	215
7.2.1.6. Soteriology	218
7.2.1.7. Ecclesiology	220
7.2.1.8. Eschatology	223
7.2.2. The Doctrinal Scope of the “Union with Christ” Thought in the <i>Institutes</i>	227
	230

CHAPTER EIGHT

Conclusion

8.1. Re-reading Calvin’s Theology as a Constructive Proposal	233
8.2. Korean Reformed Theology and Calvin’s “Union with Christ” Thought	233
8.3. American Reformed Theology and Calvin’s “Union with Christ” Thought	234
8.4. The Metaphorical Expressions of the Various Notions of Calvin’s “Union with Christ” Thought	235
8.5. The Theological Meanings of Calvin’s “Union with Christ” Thought	236
8.6. Theological Structure of the “Union with Christ” Thought and the <i>Institutes</i>	238
8.7. The Doctrinal Scope of the “Union with Christ” Thought in Calvin’s Theology	238
8.8. Evaluative and Constructive Comments	240
8.9. Towards the Practical Application of the “Union with Christ” Thought	241
	242

BIBLIOGRAPHY

244

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<i>CO</i>	<i>Calvini Opera</i> (<i>Ioannis Calvini opera quae supersunt omnia</i>), in <i>Corpus Reformationum</i> [<i>CO</i> 1-59 = <i>CR</i> 29-87], ed. Guilielmus Baum, Eduardus Cunitz, and Eduardus Ruess (Brunsvigae: Apud C. A. Schwetschke Et Filium, 1863-1900).
<i>Comm</i>	<i>Commentaries</i> , 44 vols. (Edinburgh: The Calvin Translation Society, 1843-55).
<i>Institutes</i>	<i>Institutes of the Christian Religion</i> , ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles, 2 vols. Library of Christian Classics Series nos. 20-1 (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1960).
<i>Letters</i>	<i>Letters of John Calvin</i> , ed. Jules Bonnet, 4 vols. (New York: Burt Franklin Reprints, 1972-3).
<i>OS</i>	<i>Johannis Calvini Opera Selecta</i> , ed. P. Barth, W. Niesel, and D. Scheuner, 5 vols. (Munich: Christian Kaiser, 1926-52).
<i>Serm</i>	<i>Sermons...</i> (Reprint, Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1973-2008). <i>Sermons from Job</i> , trans. Leroy Nixon. <i>Calvini Opera</i> .
<i>TT</i>	<i>Calvin's Tracts and Treatises</i> , trans. Henry Beveridge, 3 vols. (Edinburgh: the Calvin Translation Society, 1844-51, Reprint, Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1958).

✱ About Calvin's theological works, I will inscribe as the abbreviated formula, as follows:

CO. 5:350 = *Calvini Opera*, volume 5, column 350.

Comm. on 1 Jn. 5:11 = *Commentaries* (Calvin Translation Society, 1843-55) on 1 John, chapter 5, verse 11.

Institutes, 2.12.7 = *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, book 2, chapter 12, clause (or verse) 7.

Letters, 1:369 = *Letters of John Calvin*, volume 1, page 369.

OS.1:73 = *Opera Selecta*, volume 1, column 73.

Serm. on Dt. 2:1-7 = *Sermons* on Deuteronomy, chapter 2, verse 1-7.

TT. 2:121 = *Calvin's Tracts and Treatises*, volume 2, page 121.

PART ONE

Korean-American Calvinistic Theology and Calvin's “Union with Christ” Thought

I am crucified with Christ. This explains the manner in which we, who are dead to the law, live to God. Ingrafted into the death of Christ, we derive from it a secret energy, as the wig does from the root... *Yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.* This explains what he meant by “living to God.” He does not live by his own life, but is animated by the secret power of Christ; so that Christ may be said to live and grow in him; for, as the soul enlivens the body, so Christ imparts life to his members. *It is a remarkable sentiment, that believers live out of themselves, that is, they live in Christ; which can only be accomplished by holding real and actual communication with him.*¹ (own emphasis.)

Union with Jesus Christ is at once the center and circumference of authentic human existence, and from a sense that the theology behind the doctrine of union with Christ overshadows much of the larger ecumenical dialogue. Christian faith has no genuine reality and the Church no unique mission in the world if men cannot share the life and destiny of Jesus Christ. *Amid all the issues that have separated the great Christian traditions, the question of how men are united with Christ has long been and still is the issue that lies closest to the heart of the Church.* Further, there has probably never been a time as promising as our own for the possibility of understanding the different perspectives through which the doctrine of union with Christ has been seen.² (own emphasis.)

¹ *Comm.* on Gal. 2:20.

² Lewis B. Smedes, *All Things Made New: A Theology of Man's Union with Christ* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1970), 7-8.

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

1.1. Background to the Research

In his book *The Theology of John Calvin*, John Partee makes the following statement about the place of the notion of “union with Christ” in Calvin’s theology:

Claiming union with Christ as the only key to unlocking all the mysteries of Calvin’s thought would be egregious, but ‘union with Christ’ is one master key that opens many doors which have been closed for a long time.³

These words suggest that although it is possible to overburden the notion of “union with Christ,” it can nevertheless be seen as a core idea of Calvin’s thought, and it may also have an important role as a key concept to unlock crucial aspects of his theology.

It is the argument of this dissertation that the notion “union with Christ” is indeed at the core of Calvin’s theology, and that it permeates the structure and content of his theology. In other words, in Calvin’s theology the notion of “union with Christ” extends across his whole theological corpus and is not to be limited to one doctrinal aspect. Therefore the phrase “union with Christ thought” is often used in this dissertation as a way to indicate the comprehensiveness and encompassing nature of the notion of “union with Christ” in Calvin’s theology.

Understanding “union with Christ” as a *thought* is very important for accessing Calvin’s theology. While the “union with Christ” *doctrine* features when Calvin explains the doctrine itself directly (especially in light of soteriology), the “union with Christ” *thought* indicates the pervasiveness of this notion also when other doctrines or theological themes are explained.⁴

³ See Charles Partee, *The Theology of John Calvin* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2008), xvi.

⁴ What is the core difference between these two notions, viz. the “*union with Christ*” *thought* versus the “*union with Christ*” *doctrine*? In short, it has to do with the way in which one approach the notion of “union with Christ” as well as how one views its scope. Most theologians have approached Calvin’s notion of “union with Christ” as a mere doctrinal notion, thereby understanding it in a reductionist manner. As a result hereof this

This said, the question can be asked whether Korean Reformed theology, which has largely accepted a particular strand of American Calvinist thought, has not reduced Calvin's "union with Christ" *thought*, and applied it only in one doctrinal area, that is, in soteriology.⁵

The problem of this reduction of the scope and influence of Calvin's "union with Christ" thought, remains — this study will argue — an issue that has not yet been solved nor readily reformed until the present day, even though Korean Reformed theologies have existed for more than a century, and despite the fact that many diverse books and dissertations related to Calvin's theology are continuously being published, translated and disseminated widely in Korean Reformed theological circles.

The following quotation by Karin Maag indicates the unabated interest in Calvin's theology or Calvinistic theology in Korean Reformed Theology:

Indeed, an overview of the field in the last ten years shows that publications focusing on Calvin have continued unabated. For instance, the Meeter Center collection features thirty-five master's theses and sixty-nine PhD dissertations on John Calvin written between 1995 and 2005... One particular area of growth is the number of PhD dissertations written by Korean students on Calvin. For instance, slightly less than a fifth of the PhD theses on Calvin produced in the last ten years and held by the Meeter Center were written by Korean students, as compared with less than a tenth in the previous decade. The influence of Calvinism in its Presbyterian form in South Korea has continued to be strong, and it seems that as more and more young Korean theologians enter graduate school, the focus of their research is on the founders of the Reformed tradition, especially on Calvin.⁶

Although this quotation correctly points to the rapid growth and contribution of Korean Reformed Theology to the study on Calvin, the question remains how the notion of "union

important notion is often viewed only as a "sub-doctrine" within the discussion of soteriology and the sacrament. In contrast, this study approaches Calvin's "union with Christ" not only as a doctrine, but as a more broadly conceived theological "motif," or theological "theme," or theological "reasoning," or theological "thinking," or theological "idea" which permeates Calvin's entire theological contribution. The phrase "Calvin's theological thought" is thus used as a type of technical term to indicate this broader approach. Regarding this, Evans also maintains the following: "... this work will often refer to "union with Christ" as a "motif" or "theme" rather than a "doctrine." We will see that a number of divergent conceptions of "union with Christ" have competed for recognition within the tradition." William B. Evans, *Imputation and Impartation: Union with Christ in American Reformed Theology* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2008), 2. Chapter Seven explains the difference between the "union with Christ" thought and the "union with Christ" doctrine in more detail. See especially '7.1.1. The Issue of 'Central Doctrine' or 'Central Thought' in Calvin's Theology.'

⁵ See Paul ChulHong Kang, *Justification: The Imputation of Christ's Righteousness from Reformation Theology to the American Great Awakening and the Korean Revivals* (New York: Peter Lang, 2006), 273.

⁶ Karin Maag, "Calvin Research: Tools, Institutions, and State of Research," in *The Calvin Handbook*, ed. Herman J. Selderhuis, trans. Judith J. Guder, Henry J. Baron, Randi H. Lundell, and Gerrit W. Sheeres (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 20.

with Christ” is treated in this body of scholarship. My research reached the conclusion that in spite of the abundance of Calvin studies within Korean Reformed theology, the notion of “union with Christ” has been neglected, and that there is a lack of recognition for the importance and possible impact of this concept in Korean Reformed theology.⁷

Emil Brunner states that the doctrine of “union with Christ” is the “*center of all Calvinistic thinking*.”⁸ The doctrine of “union with Christ,” is therefore — not surprisingly — often discussed in Calvinism, albeit it in a certain way. The notion of “union with Christ” is also often described as a key biblical notion. In this regard, we can quote Stewart’s following statement that emphasizes “union with Christ” as a core thought of Paul and the New Testament: “*The heart of Paul’s religion is ‘union with Christ.’ This, more than any other conception ... is the key which unlocks the secrets of his soul.*”⁹

Given the fact that Calvin was such a Bible-centred theologian, it is not surprising that the notion of “union with Christ” is central. Calvin’s deep motivation for appropriating the concept of “union with Christ” can be seen in his statement: “*First, we must understand that as long as Christ remains outside of us, and we are separated from him, all that he has suffered and done for the salvation of the human race remains useless and of no value for us.*”¹⁰ Paul Helm also insists that “*Calvin’s basic thought, as he moves from considering the work of Christ to how that work is applied to us and affects us, is that by the unspeakable mercy of God we are united to Christ, and from that one ‘mystical’ union two distinct but inseparable benefits flow.*”¹¹

One could say that the “union with Christ” thought is taken as seriously in Korean Reformed ecclesial practice as similar formulae in Korean Reformed theology. Nevertheless, the question can be asked whether Korean theologians have engaged sufficiently with the notion of “union with Christ,” which is a central thought (one might say a “core thought”) of the New Testament and which is also dealt with extensively in Calvin’s theology.

⁷ Regarding the reception of the “union with Christ” motif in Korean Reformed theology, see Chapter Two of this dissertation for a more detailed discussion.

⁸ Emil Brunner, *Vom Werk des heiligen Geistes* (Tübingen, Mohr, 1935), 38.

⁹ James S. Stewart, *A Man in Christ: The Vital Elements of St. Paul’s Religion* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1962), 147.

¹⁰ John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles, 2 vols. Library of Christian Classics Series nos. 20-1 (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1960), 3.1.1.

¹¹ Paul Helm, *Calvin: A Guide for the Perplexed* (London: T&T Clark, 2008), 71. Regarding the other references to the importance of the “union with Christ” thought, see also the following: Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, ed. G. W. Bromiley and T. F. Torrance (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1957), IV/1:527; Daniel L. Migliore, *Faith Seeking Understanding: An Introduction to Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2000), 241-64. Migliore states that “the third article of the creed affirms that God is not only *over* us and *for* us but also at work *in* us.”

Has Korean Reformed theology not failed to develop or extend the notion of “union with Christ” and thus relegated this important notion to the periphery of theological discourse? This study wishes to claim that Korean Reformed theology, by treating it as a mere aspect of soteriology, has neglected this idea over the last century or so, despite the enthusiastic reception, development and revival period of Calvin’s theology in its history of 130 years.¹² This is a great loss, one can argue, not only to Calvinistic academic discourse in general, but to Korean Reformed theology in particular.

In this regard one can ask: what is the reason that Calvin’s “union with Christ” thought has been restricted and its scope reduced in Korean Reformed theology? One possible answer — which will be proposed in this study — is that Korean Reformed theology has been affected strongly by the theological influence of a certain strand of American Calvinistic Reformed theology, which it adopted uncritically. In short, the reduction of the possible scope and the scant attention to “union with Christ” thought that existed in American Calvinism and American Reformed theology has resulted in a theological deficit in Korean Reformed theology.¹³

This implies that the reduction of the scope of Calvin’s “union with Christ” thought exists also in American Reformed theology (or American Calvinistic theology). From early on and until the present, the representative American Calvinists who have influenced Korean Reformed theology have indeed dealt with Calvin’s “union with Christ,” but almost all have limited its scope to the category of soteriology.¹⁴ American Calvinists, one may say, have treated “union with Christ” — which echoes extensively throughout Calvin’s entire theology — as only part of the one doctrine, namely that of soteriology.

This dissertation will argue that there have not been sufficient attempts to deal with

¹² Yang-Ho Lee, “Calvin’s Soteriology and Korean Church,” in *A Commemorative Academic Conference for the 500 Anniversary of Calvin: Calvin’s Soteriology and Ecclesiology*, ed. Myung-Jun Ahn (Seoul: SFC Publication, 2011), 215.

¹³ There is a very close inter-relationship between American Reformed theology (or American Calvinistic theology) and Korean Reformed theology. This has historic roots, since the conservative tendency in American Reformed theology had a strong influence on Korean Reformed theology ever since its formative years. Consequently there is a very close relationship between the developmental process of American Reformed theology and the reception of Calvinist theology in Korean Reformed theology circles. In short, Korean Reformed theology was formed in close proximity to conservative American Reformed theology; it was thus forged under the overwhelming influence of the conservatively inclined American Reformed theology. As dealt with here, American Reformed theology means mainly the conservative American Calvinistic theology in which Charles W. Hodge, A. A. Hodge, Augustus Hopkins Strong, Louis Berkhof, and B. B. Warfield, among others, are prominent figures. For a more detailed explanation of the inter-relationship between American Reformed theology and Korean Reformed theology, see ‘2.1.1. The Early American Missionaries and Calvin’s “Union with Christ” Thought’ and ‘2.2.3. A High Degree of Dependence on the American Calvinistic Theology’ in Chapter Two.

¹⁴ See William B. Evans, *Imputation and Impartation: Union with Christ in American Reformed Theology*, iv-xii.

“union with Christ” as “an all-encompassing theme” or “a thought” in studies of Calvin’s overall theological project. In other words, because the importance of this ‘union with Christ’ thought has not been adequately recognized, it has not received its rightful place within a broader theological framework.

Until now American Reformed theology¹⁵ has frequently attempted to explain the doctrine of “union with Christ” itself. But was it successful in relating this doctrine to the various other doctrines in Calvin’s theology — that is, the doctrine of God, Creation, anthropology, Scripture, Christology, Pneumatology, soteriology, ecclesiology, and eschatology?

Of course, although some American Reformed theologians, including Smedes, dealt with the doctrine of “union with Christ” with respect to Christology (Incarnation) and the doctrine of sacraments, they did not exhaust the extensive scope of the “union with Christ” thought.¹⁶ As a consequence, in the strands of American Reformed theology that have been most influential in Korean Reformed theology, the notion of “union with Christ” in Calvin has been confined to the limited scope of soteriology (or at times ecclesiology, specifically with regard to the doctrine of the sacraments). At present, the importance of “union with Christ” has gained renewed interest, and there are attempts to approach it as “a theme” or “a method” and not only as one doctrinal aspect among others, although this trend is still germinal.¹⁷

Unfortunately, this limitation of the scope of “union with Christ” in American Calvinism influenced Korean Reformed theology directly, because as American Calvinism had accepted Calvin’s theology (in a certain way), Korean Reformed theology in turn followed this line of thought.¹⁸ In this study, Korean Reformed theology refers mostly to Korean Presbyterian theology, but regarding the notion of “union with Christ” the situation is mostly the same in other denominations as well.

The unfortunate result was that Korean Reformed theology adopted the reduced scope of the American Reformed theology’s version of “union with Christ” uncritically. Thus

¹⁵ It is acknowledged that American Reformed theology contains various strands, but this dissertation deals with some of the common features associated with American Reformed theology, notwithstanding possible differences.

¹⁶ See Lewis B. Smedes, *Union with Christ: A Biblical View of the New Life in Jesus Christ* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1983).

¹⁷ The limitation of the scope of Calvin’s “union with Christ” thought and the limited interpretation of Calvin’s theology in American Calvinism or American Reformed theology will receive more intense attention in Part One of this study (Korean-American Calvinistic Theology and Calvin’s “Union with Christ” Thought).

¹⁸ In-Sub Ahn, “Calvin in Asia,” in *The Calvin Handbook*, ed. Herman J. Selderhuis, trans. Judith J. Guder Henry J. Baron, Randi H. Lundell, and Gerrit W. Sheeres (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 516-9.

American Reformed theology has had extensive influence on Korean Reformed theology from the end of the 19th century, when Christianity first came to Korea, until the present day. Seong Won Park's observes correctly:

The Reformed tradition itself came into Korea at the hands of missionaries from Presbyterian churches in the United States, Canada, and Australia. Thus, its transmission from Geneva entailed a historic journey of three hundred years, spanning three continents and three different cultures. This long journey may have shaped Korean Reformed theology in a manner quite different from Calvin's understanding of the gospel and Christian witness.¹⁹

Park thus points to the distance and difference between Calvin's own theology and its Korean Reformed version. If this is also the case with regard to the interpretation of the notion of "union with Christ," we can deduce that there might also be a considerable difference between the Korean Reformed theology's understanding of "union with Christ" and Calvin's own understanding.

To see whether this is indeed the case, it is important to look more closely at 130 years of Korean Reformed theology. The history of Calvinistic Reformed theology that entered Korea can be divided into the following four periods:²⁰ The period of introduction and early reception of Calvinistic Reformed theology (1885-1919), the period of suffering under the Japanese colonial policy (1919-1945), the period of factional strife and the development (or growth) of the reception of Calvin's theology (1945-1979), and the period of flourishing (1980 to the present time).²¹

Korean Reformed theology has been introduced to Calvinism by, and received theological influences, mainly from North and South American Presbyterian missionaries,

¹⁹ Seong Won Park, "The Social and Economic Impact of John Calvin on the Korean Church and Society," in *John Calvin Rediscovered: The Impact of His Social and Economic Thought*, ed. Edward Dommen and James D. Bratt (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2007), 109.

²⁰ In-Sub Ahn, "Calvin in Asia," 516-9. Ahn classifies the stages of development of Calvinistic Reformed theology in the history of Korean Christianity as the following three: the period of the introduction of Calvin's Thoughts (1885-1945), the period of the development of Calvin reception (1945-1979), and the period of the prosperity of Calvin's influence (1980 till today).

²¹ See The Institute of Korean Church History Studies, *A History of Korean Church*, Vol. 1; See also, The Institute of Korean Church History Studies, *A History of Korean Church, Vol. 2 (1919 – 1945)* (Seoul: The Christian Literature Press, 1990). For the other classifications of the reception of Calvinistic Reformed theology in Korea, see the following doctrinal dissertations: Soon-Seong Kim, "Ecclesial Spirituality in the Korean Presbyterian Church: A Practical And Hermeneutical Investigation Into The Problem Of Marginality" (Ph.D. Thesis, University of Stellenbosch, 2004), 14; Hyeo See Kim, "The Relationship between Church History and Mission History: With Special Reference to Presbyterianism in Korea" (Ph.D. Thesis, University of Stellenbosch, 1997), 138-40.

who were influenced strongly by Calvinistic Reformed theology from a very early period.²² Afterwards, from the period of Japanese colonial policy until the liberation of Korea, Calvinism has been rooted more firmly in Korean Reformed theology through Korean theologians who returned from study abroad, especially in the United States.²³ Although Korean Reformed theology had suffered during the period of factional strife, it has subsequently continued to periods of development and flourishing. The following remarks can be made with regards to possible limitations regarding the reception of Calvin's theology in Korea.

Firstly, the overall climate of Korean Reformed theology is still strongly in line with the theological thoughts of the early Korean forerunners and the concomitant American Calvinistic influence, and thus Calvin's "union with Christ" still is not given a sufficiently comprehensive place in Korean Reformed theology.

Secondly, given this structural limitation, the Korean Reformed Church (especially, conservative Presbyterian denominations) largely disregarded other theologies than the conservative American Calvinistic tradition which came to dominate Korean Reformed theology. This should be acknowledged.²⁴

Thirdly, as a result of these structural limitations, direct research of Calvin's own theology has not occurred actively enough in Korean Reformed theology. Primary research of Calvin's own theology is rendered difficult in the confines of American conservative Calvinism and pioneering Korean Reformed theology. Welcome news indeed is that currently Korean Reformed theology has started conducting direct research on Calvin's own theology.²⁵

Lastly, as a result of all these limitations, the problem of the epistemological absence of Calvin's "union with Christ" thought exists in Korean Reformed theology on a structural level. More seriously, there is confusion about the manner in which this core thought has been expressed throughout his entire theological corpus. This epistemological deficiency has resulted in the fact that "union with Christ" thought has not received its due

²² See Harvie M. Conn, "Studies in the Theology of the Korean Presbyterian Church," 26-57. See also Kang, *Justification*, 152-7.

²³ Hyungkyu Kim, "Han Sangdong and Reformed Spirituality in the Korean Presbyterian Church (1920-1970)" (Ph.D. Thesis, University of Stellenbosch, 1998), 114-41. See also Harvie M. Conn, "Studies in the Theology of the Korean Presbyterian Church," 136-78.

²⁴ I strongly emphasize that such argumentation is not intended to belittle or criticize the Calvinistic conservative theology of Korean Reformism. Rather, I stress the limitation of scope and the absence of the importance of Calvin's "union with Christ" thought; and then examine its main causes, for the conservative bent has contributed to stimulate vigorous research of Calvin's theology in Korean Reformed theology.

²⁵ The detail of the primary sources of Calvin theology will be dealt with in Chapter Two and Chapter Three.

regard in Korean Reformed theology.

However, I want to emphasize that I do not intend to describe only the limitations of Korean Reformed theology, because this tradition has managed to accomplish an important role that has affected and reformed the whole of Korean society, as well as Korean Christianity through the Gospel of Christ. Nevertheless, because of the limited interpretation and failure to recognize the importance of “union with Christ,” I will examine those defects intensively against the background of Korean Reformed theology. I intend to introduce it factually, and hope to contribute constructively toward the development of Korean Reformed theology.

To overcome such structural limitations, as indicated above, we need theological research in order to re-evaluate the original scope, location, and importance of “union with Christ” thought in Calvin’s theology. This is an urgent task for Calvinistic theological scholarship in general, and for Korean Reformed theology in particular. Furthermore, unlocking the possible meaning of the notion of “union with Christ,” emphasizing its importance and re-applying it extensively in our theology, could reveal this notion’s promise and value, thus enriching Korean Reformed theology.

1.2. Research Questions

In this dissertation the following questions should be addressed in the light of what has been proposed thus far: Does that Calvin’s “union with Christ” thought have a more extensive place in Calvin’s theology than is generally acknowledged? And, by contrast, have Korean Reformed theology,²⁶ and the American (or Calvinist) Reformed theology that influenced it, dealt with Calvin’s “union with Christ” thought in a reduced manner, and applied this thought practically to their theology and doctrines in a limited way? If this is the case, this becomes an epistemological problem, since such a reading of “union with Christ” lacks the doctrinal viewpoint that takes serious the possible scope of its theological application and practical relevance.

If these questions are answered positively, the possible value of the “union with Christ” thought as a core value, and an important principle of faith for the church and Christians, is limited.²⁷ This study seeks to indicate that the notion of “union with Christ” is

²⁶ This phrase refers to the whole of Korean Reformed theology as it is, but indicates especially the theology of conservative Presbyterian denominations.

²⁷ See Lewis B. Smedes, *Union with Christ: A Biblical View of the New Life in Jesus Christ* (Grand

rooted more comprehensively and more deeply than these theological traditions allow, and is also closely connected to the various doctrines that are the foundation of our belief. There is thus a deficiency in the way in which the doctrine of “union with Christ” has functioned in Korean Reformed and American Reformed theology.

How far is the reach of the doctrine of “union with Christ” in Calvin’s whole theology? In dealing with this question one should keep in mind – as this dissertation will argue – that it might extend further than is often realized, since the notion stretches beyond the places where Calvin uses the phrase directly. Rather, Calvin wrote about this notion in different contexts, often using diverse formulations.²⁸

The main hypothesis of this dissertation, therefore, is that Calvin’s thoughts on the “union with Christ (*unio cum Christo*)” recurs almost throughout his entire theological corpus, including his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, his biblical commentaries and his sermons and treatises.²⁹ It is reflected in words such as ‘engrafted’ (*insero, insitio*), ‘communion’ (*communio, communico*), ‘partaking’ (*participes*), ‘growing together,’ ‘becoming one with Christ’ (*coalesco*) or ‘in Christ.’³⁰ In short, therefore, it seems that “union with Christ” has played an extensive role in Calvin’s thought and theology.

An additional hypothesis to be tested in this dissertation, is whether Korean Reformed theology (especially, the Presbyterian Church) and American Reformed theology have indeed located the notion mostly within soteriology, thus not appropriating these alternative terms that allows one to deal with the matter more sufficiently. If this is the case, this presents a deficiency with regard to the doctrinal scope of the “union with Christ” thought in Korean Reformed and American Reformed theology.

The aim of this dissertation is to examine the scope and role of “union with Christ” in Calvin’s theology. To clarify the research theme, I will compare the way in which the notion of “union with Christ” functions in Calvin’s theology, in American Reformed theology, and in Korean Reformed theology. Attention will be given to the possible causes and reasons for their theological overlaps and differences, with the aim of providing clarification of the notion of the “union with Christ” thought in Calvin’s oeuvre (with a special emphasis on the *Institutes*), thus aiding towards restoring its rightful place also in

Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1983).

²⁸ See Julie Canlis, *Calvin’s Ladder: A Spiritual Theology of Ascent and Ascension* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2010), 243-4.

²⁹ Regarding the comprehensiveness of the “union with Christ” thought in Calvin’s theological corpus, but with a specific focus on the *Institutes*, see Chapter Four of this dissertation.

³⁰ See Kevin Dixon Kennedy, *Union with Christ and the Extent of the Atonement in Calvin* (New York: Peter Lang, 2002), 116.

Korean Reformed theology. With this in mind, I will research the following questions in this dissertation:

Did Calvin deal multi-directionally (comprehensively) with the thought of the “union with Christ” as a ‘central theme’ or a ‘central thought’ in his doctrines? What is the most important and decisive difference between the view of “union with Christ” which the two theological traditions have recognized? If there are differences, what are the limitations of “union with Christ” that can be rooted in Korean Reformed theology and American Reformed theology? Why did those theological differences occur, and what were the consequences?

This study strives to trace the visible differences between Calvin, on the one hand, and Korean Reformed theology and American Calvinism on the other hand. Is the difference greater in the case of Korean Reformed theology than in American Calvinism? Also, how did American Calvinism (or Reformed Theology) influence Korean Reformed theology with regard to the reception of the notion of “union with Christ”?

While the notion of “union with Christ” — as a core thought of the New Testament — is stressed in many sermons and similar orations, ironically, there are no academic books that deal with the doctrine of “union with Christ” in Korean theological academia. Neither is this only a problem and dilemma for Korean Reformed theology, but also for the entire Calvinistic scholarship. Hence research on the implications of Calvin’s “union with Christ” thought seems timely.

Accordingly, I will proceed with the following more detailed questions and issues in my dissertation: What is meant with “union with Christ”? Is there a ‘central theme’ or a ‘central principle’ that affects Calvin’s entire thinking in his theology? If such a central theme exists, what relation does it have to his “union with Christ” thought? What is the interrelation between Calvin’s “union with Christ” thought and the *Institutes of the Christian Religion*’s structural features, content and form? Is it possible to infer or verify the extensive doctrinal scope and application of “union with Christ” in Calvin’s theology?

And also: What are the limitations and perceived extent of “union with Christ” in Korean Reformed theology and American Calvinism? Did they correctly recognize Calvin’s extensive “union with Christ” thought, and accept or develop it in their theology? If there is an epistemological difference that exists between Calvin’s “union with Christ” and these two traditions, what is it? How could we re-apply Calvin’s multi-directional “union with Christ” thought, beyond the limitation of Korean and American Reformed theologians’ doctrine of the “union with Christ”? What theological method (central themes, theological methodology,

and hermeneutics) can help us to re-interpret and re-apply Calvin's "union with Christ" thought more accurately, consistently, and holistically? And how will this research affect the Korean Church (or theology) and the world of Calvinistic theological scholarship? These interrelated questions will be investigated in this dissertation.

1.3. Conceptual Clarification and Related Research

What is meant with the notion of "union with Christ"? This concept refers to a mutual indwelling between Christ and us; "Christ in us" (cf. Jn. 15:5; Gal. 2: 20; Col. 1: 27), and "we in Christ" (cf. Jn. 15: 5; 1 Co. 15: 22; 2 Co. 5:17). This concept also prevails in the New Testament.³¹ The writings of Paul and John do not hesitate to explain and emphasize "union with Christ" as a metaphorical expression. In fact, the expressions, "in Christ" (*en Christō*), "in the Lord" (*en kyriō*), "in Christ Jesus" (*en Christō Iēsou*) and "in Him" (*en autō*) appear 216 times in the Pauline letters and 26 times in the books of John.³²

This fact indicates that one can argue that the New Testament hinges on "union with Christ" as a core notion. One can also argue, in light of Scripture, that the notion is closely connected to the identity of the Church and Christians. In other words, this pivotal idea is the essence of our life, faith and office as believers, and can therefore be linked to 'the essence of Church,' 'the identity of Christian,' and 'the kingdom of God.'

Regarding the importance of the "union with Christ," John Murray maintains that union with Christ is "*the central truth of the whole doctrine of Salvation not only in its application but also in its once-for-all accomplishment in the finished work of Christ.*"³³ Paul Helm insists that "more innovative is Calvin's proposal that Christ is the author of a 'double grace' (justification and sanctification), and that *the Pauline theme of the believer's union with Christ by his Spirit* is the means by which this grace is applied to those so united."³⁴ James S. Stewart posits that "union with Christ" is Paul's core thought,³⁵ and Lewis B. Smedes emphasizes that "*the phrase 'union with Christ' does well to capture all the Pauline*

³¹ For example, see Romans 6:5, "If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection." See also Gal. 2:20, "I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me" (my emphasis).

³² Bruce Demarest, *The Cross and Salvation: The Doctrine of Salvation* (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway Books, 2006), 467-8.

³³ John Murray, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1980), 161-70.

³⁴ Paul Helm, *Calvin: A Guide for the Perplexed*, 76.

³⁵ James S. Stewart, *A Man in Christ*, 147.

vocabulary, at least as a general heading."³⁶

On the other hand, it is true that Calvin dealt with "union (*unio*) with Christ" omnidirectionally ('extensively'), frequently by similar expressions such as "communion with Christ," "participation with Christ," "engrafting into Christ," and so on.³⁷ Of course, his direct mention of "union with Christ" is treated mostly in soteriology, but his indirect references to "union with Christ" are subsumed within the comprehensive scope of his entire theological work. This fact is indicated in Karl Barth's statement, when he proposes that this doctrine "*has a comprehensive and basic significance for Calvin*. Indeed, we might almost call it his conception of the essence of Christianity."³⁸ Concerning the question of whether there is a central doctrine or principle in Calvin theology. Cornelis P. Venema's following statement offers confirmation:

Whereas older studies of Calvin's theology were often influenced by the 'central dogma' thesis of nineteenth and early twentieth century research, more recent studies have recognized the complexity of Calvin's theology.³⁹

It is widely accepted that Calvin's central theological focus is on the Triune God in Christ,⁴⁰ and this is necessarily closely related to the notion "union with Christ." Nevertheless, to say that the *doctrine* of "union with Christ" is central in Calvin's theology seems to be a forced interpretation, even though Partee rightly insists that the structure of the *Institutes of the Christian Religion* of Calvin seems to bear a close relationship to "union with Christ."⁴¹

Partee does not find any signs that the *doctrine* of "union with Christ" plays a decisive role as a central doctrine;⁴² instead, the *Institutes of the Christian Religion* shows the

³⁶ Lewis B. Smedes, *All Things Made New: A Theology of Man's Union with Christ* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1970), 7.

³⁷ See Kevin Dixon Kennedy, *Union with Christ*, 111-3.

³⁸ Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, II/1: 149; IV/3: 2, pp. 539ff., here 551.

³⁹ Cornelis P. Venema, *Accepted and Renewed in Christ: The "Twofold Grace of God" and the Interpretation of Calvin's Theology* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007), 7.

⁴⁰ See *Institutes*, 1.6.1. Here Calvin writes on the knowledge of God the Creator, and deals not only with the knowledge of God but also with the person of the Mediator as the Redeemer. In such terms, he writes the *Institutes of the Christian Religion* in 'the structure of Trinitarian God in Christ' as a central theological thought.

⁴¹ See Partee, "Calvin's Central Dogma Again," in *The Organizational Structure of Calvin's Theology*, ed. Richard C. Gamble, 7 vols. (New York: Garland Publishing, INC, 1992), 79. See also Charles Partee, *The Theology of John Calvin*, 39-40.

⁴² It pays attention to the differences between the *thought* of "union with Christ" and the *doctrine* of "union with Christ." It is more appropriate to approach it not as a doctrine, but as a thought or a theological methodology. I suggest the "union with Christ" or 'union with Triune God' thought as a methodology for an

diversity of doctrines, with the particular features of each being stressed. One can therefore argue that Calvin's thought of "union with Christ" is to be approached not only as a central theme or doctrine, but is to be seen more holistically, taking into account the structure and content of his theology. Serious consideration should be given to a theological methodology that can demonstrate the relationship between Calvin's "union with Christ" thought and the way it encompasses his entire theology (including his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, biblical commentaries, treatises, sermons, catechisms, and letters).

This said, most Calvin scholars agree that Calvin had developed a highly organized work of systematic theology when he wrote the *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. This work shows a systematic theological structure, organized around the indivisible relationship between "the Triune God" and "us,"⁴³ which is the Trinitarian structure of his theology. In addition, that structure also shows an undeniable close relationship with his "union with Christ" thought.⁴⁴ One can therefore say that the notion is integrated into Calvin's whole theological enterprise like various threads that form part of a piece of finely woven cloth.

Regarding the Trinitarian scope of Calvin's theology, Venema maintains:

In our exposition of the 'twofold grace of God,' reference was made on several occasions to *the Trinitarian scope and structure of Calvin's theology*. Without a proper recognition of these elements, the relative importance and nature of his doctrine of justification and sanctification will not be correctly interpreted⁴⁵ (own emphasis).

Venema's conviction stressing the "twofold grace of God" is an important key to the interpretation of Calvin's theology. The doctrine of justification and sanctification as the twofold grace of God is emphasized as being at the heart of Calvin's theology.

Within the emphasis on the Trinitarian structure of Calvin's theology, one should note that Calvin understood "union with Christ" as the "mystical union (*unio mystica*)" through the Holy Spirit.⁴⁶ In other words, the root of Calvin's use of the notion of "union with Christ" is the 'organic union' between the Triune God and us, through the work of the Holy Spirit. This is what Calvin describes as a "wondrous exchange (or "the marvelous

integrated interpretation of Calvin's theology, insofar as it contains the theme, structure, contents, and the scope of his theology.

⁴³ Michael Horton, *The Christian Faith: A Systematic Theology for Pilgrims on the Way* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2011), 52-3.

⁴⁴ Charles Partee, *The Theology of John Calvin*, 40-3.

⁴⁵ Cornelis P. Venema, *Accepted and Renewed in Christ*, 196.

⁴⁶ See Kye Won Lee, *Living in Union With Christ: The Practical Theology of Thomas F. Torrance* (New York: Peter Lang, 2003), 307.

exchange”))” between Christ and us.⁴⁷ This aspect is further clarified by Calvin’s statement about “union with Christ” in the *Commentary* of 1 Corinthians:

As for myself, I acknowledge, that it is only when we obtain Christ Himself, that we come to partake of Christ’s benefits. He is, however, obtained, I affirm, not only when we believe that He was made an offering for us, but when He dwells in us, when He is one with us, when we are members of His flesh, when, in fine, *we are incorporated with Him (so to speak) into one life and substance (Some a version translated it that “we become united in one life and substance (if I may say so) with Him)*⁴⁸ (own emphasis).

We note a strong focus on “immanent union,” “substantial union,” or “real union” through the Holy Spirit between “God and Christ” or “Christ and us” in Calvin’s thought on “union with Christ,”⁴⁹ which leads Charles Partee to insist that “*Calvin’s confession and his conviction are unified by the work of the Holy Spirit – the bond of union between the Father and Son and the bond of union between God and the believers.*”⁵⁰

The thought of “union with Christ” or ‘union with the Triune God’ features extensively in the various doctrines of Calvin’s theology.⁵¹ For example, Calvin briefly related it to the doctrine of creation and anthropology as “God dwelt in Adam” or “Adam united with God,” in one of his polemical statements against Osiander in *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 2:

“Meanwhile, Osiander thinks he has been the first to see what the image of God was: that God’s glory shone not only in the exceptional gifts with which Adam had been adorned, *but that God dwelt essentially in him. I admit that Adam bore God’s image, in so far as he was joined to God (which is the true and highest perfection of dignity).* Nevertheless, I maintain that this likeness ought to be sought only in those marks of excellence with which God had distinguished Adam over all other living creatures”⁵² (own emphasis).

This statement is one example among many that can be used to demonstrate the fact

⁴⁷ See Michael Horton, *The Christian Faith*, 593. See also Lee, *Living in Union with Christ*, 307.

⁴⁸ *Comm.* on 1 Co. 11:24.

⁴⁹ See J. Todd Billings, *Calvin, Participation, And the Gift: The Activity of Believers in union with Christ*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007) 62-3.

⁵⁰ Charles Partee, *The Theology of John Calvin*, xvi.

⁵¹ See Julie Canlis, *Calvin’s Ladder*, 243-4; Ernst M. Conradie, “John Calvin on Creation and Salvation: A Creative Tension?” in *Creation and Salvation*, Volume 1: A Mosaic of Selected Classic Christian Theologies, ed. Ernst M. Conradie (Zweigniederlassung, Zurich: LIT, 2012), 203-23.

⁵² *Institutes*, 2.12.6.

that the thought of “union with Christ” (or “union with God” or “union with the Triune God”) has certainly been covered in his theology. On the other hand, Kevin Dixon Kennedy rightly insists: “Yet, it is still left to ascertain the exact meaning of ‘union with Christ’ in Calvin’s theology. We must understand not only how we come to be united to Christ, but also what this union entails.”⁵³

By this Kennedy means that we ought to regard more extensively the various theological meanings of “union with Christ” and its comprehensive scope. The conclusion can thus be made that there is an expansive relationship between the thought of “union with Christ” and Calvin’s theology, and that this statement invites further research.⁵⁴

This said, it is not so easy to indicate how Calvin’s thoughts on “union with Christ” have been extensively integrated into his entire theology in various forms, because the phrase “union with Christ” that Calvin mentions directly, was dealt with mostly in soteriology and the doctrine of the Sacraments. As indicated already, and as will be expanded more in the rest of the dissertation, Calvin did not understand “union with Christ” only as a doctrine subordinated in soteriology.⁵⁵

In fact, while Calvin developed his theological work, he did not persist in only the transcendental theology that dealt with “God,” but also proceeded to an immanent theology that treated “us” as being in an inter-relationship with God.⁵⁶ Perusal into the structure or the contents of the *Institutes of the Christian Religion* reveals a compound of the two theological directions (the transcendental and the immanent). Calvin’s *Institutes of the Christian Religion* is a theological work composed of two central thoughts: “God” and “us,” harmonized like threads woven into a fabric.⁵⁷

As a Scripturally-centered theologian Calvin has been called the first “modern” biblical scholar.⁵⁸ At the same time, he led Reformation thinking on soteriology based on Scripture.⁵⁹ It would have been atypical of him to have dealt lightly with such a central

⁵³ Kevin Dixon Kennedy, *Union with Christ*, 116.

⁵⁴ See Randall C. Zachman, “Communion cum Christo,” in *The Calvin Handbook*, ed. Herman J. Selderhuis, trans. Judith J. Guder, Henry J. Baron, Randi H. Lundell, and Gerrit W. Sheeres (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 365. He argues that “Calvin’s understanding of union and communion with Christ must be set within the larger context of his theological vision as a whole.”

⁵⁵ Kevin Dixon Kennedy, *Union with Christ*, 122.

⁵⁶ Kye Won Lee, *Living in Union With Christ*, 3.

⁵⁷ Regarding the inter-relationship between Calvin’s “union with Christ” and the structure of the *Institutes*, see Chapter Six.

⁵⁸ Raymond A. Blacketer, “Commentaries and Prefaces,” in *The Calvin Handbook*, ed. Herman J. Selderhuis, trans. Judith J. Guder, Henry J. Baron, Randi H. Lundell, and Gerrit W. Sheeres (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 181.

⁵⁹ See Stephen N. Williams, “Living in Union with Christ according to John Calvin,” in *Living in Union with Christ in Today’s World: The Witness of John Calvin and Ignatius Loyola*, ed. Brendan McConvery

thought as “union with Christ.” In Calvin’s theology (especially in the *Institutes*) it is shown to be closely inter-connected with the structure and content of his whole theology. Through more incisive research, so this dissertation proposes, the importance of “union with Christ” thought in Calvin’s whole theology could be newly recognized, reinterpreted and re-applied.

1.4. Research Methodology

This dissertation can be placed in the discipline of systematic theology with special emphasis on Calvin’s “union with Christ” thought. This thought will be thoroughly analyzed and examined against the background of Korean Reformed theology, American Calvinistic theology and Calvin’s own theology. This will be done through a literary study that attends closely to primary sources, and the relevant secondary sources needed to sustain the argument of this dissertation.

Major emphasis will be given to the presentation of evidence from Calvin’s primary sources, especially the *Institutes*. Besides the *Institutes*, Calvin’s biblical commentaries, sermons, treatises, catechisms, letters, and so forth will be used (albeit that a thorough study of his whole oeuvre falls beyond the scope of this study). Additionally a vast array of secondary sources, which are related to Calvin’s theology and his “union with Christ” thought, will be compared and contrasted.

In addition to the formal research methodology used in this dissertation, the question could be asked what lenses will be used in looking at Calvin’s theology in light of our research questions, and how do we understand Calvin’s own “theological methodology”? Philip Walker Butin says that for a dogmatic understanding of the divine-human relationship of Calvin’s theology we need to approach it by using a “trinitarian paradigm.”⁶⁰ I entirely agree with his argument, and will therefore research and analyze Calvin’s theology through a Trinity-centric lens.

A salient feature of the theologies of influential Christian theologians such as Athanasius (297-373), Augustine (354-430), Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274), and John Calvin (1509-1564), amongst others, is that they systematized and developed the main doctrines and theologies of Christianity in a Bible-centred, Trinity-centred, and Christ-centred way. Although the concept ‘theological methodology’ did not exist then, all of those theologians

(Dublin, Ireland: Veritas Publications, 2011), 17.

⁶⁰ Philip Walker Butin, *Revelation, Redemption, and Response: Calvin’s Trinitarian Understanding of the Divine-Human Relationship* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).

demonstrated, systematized, enlarged and developed the doctrine and theology of Christianity in a way that could be described as a Bible-centric, Trinity-centric, and Christ-centric theology.

Calvin was a Bible-centric theologian per excellence. He was also a Reformed theologian, who had led the Reformation that was thoroughly based on Scripture about soteriology, naturally pursuing Trinity-centric and Christ-centric theology, as central thoughts of Scripture. In fact, Calvin's theology is thoroughly '*Trinity-centric in Christ*.'⁶¹

On the other hand, Calvin's theology appears to be *pneumatologically Trinity-centric* in the light an abundance of statements from his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, and from other theologians' treatises and books.⁶² As another option we can see Calvin's theology is *Christo-centric*, again based on readings from the *Institutes* and other relevant sources.⁶³ Finally, we can also Calvin's theology as *Christologically Trinity-centric*.⁶⁴

What results are we supposed to infer from the abundance of support from a variety

⁶¹ This is seen in the following statements of Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, and other theologians' treatises and books: *Institutes*, 1.10.1; 1.10.2; 1.11.1; 1.13.23; 1.13.24; 1.13.27; 1.14.5; 2.10.4; 2.16.19; Louis Berkhof, *Reformed Dogmatics* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1932), 68, 79; Michael Horton, *The Christian Faith*, 288-93; J. Todd Billings, *Calvin, Participation, and the Gift*, 100, 102, 196; François Wendel, *Calvin: The Origins and Development of His Religious Thought*, trans. Philip Mairet (London: Collins, 1963), 126, 166-8; Douglas F. Kelly, "The True and Triune God: Calvin's Doctrine of the Holy Trinity (1.11-13)," in *A Theological Guide to Calvin's Institutes: Essays and Analysis*, ed. David W. Hall, Peter A. Lillback (Phillipsburg, New Jersey: P&R Publishing Company, 2008), 65-89; William Edgar, "Ethics: The Christian Life and Good Works according to Calvin (3.6-10, 17-19)," in *A Theological Guide to Calvin's Institutes: Essays and Analysis*, ed. David W. Hall and Peter A. Lillback (Phillipsburg, New Jersey: P&R Publishing Company, 2008), 320-46; Peter Opitz, "Scripture," in *The Calvin Handbook*, ed. Herman J. Selderhuis, trans. Judith J. Guder, Henry J. Baron, Randi H. Lundell, and Gerrit W. Sheeres (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 235-6; I. John Hesselink, "Pneumatology," in *The Calvin Handbook*, ed. Herman J. Selderhuis, trans. Judith J. Guder, Henry J. Baron, Randi H. Lundell, and Gerrit W. Sheeres (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 299.

⁶² Cf. *Institutes*, 1.6.1; 1.13.14; 3.11.5; Donald K. McKim, *The Authoritative Word* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1983), 205-6; Otto Weber, *Foundations of Dogmatics II* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1983), 134; Lewis B. Smedes, *All Things Made New*, 48-9; I. John Hesselink, "Pneumatology," 299-300.

⁶³ *Institutes*, 1.11.3; 1.13.10; 1.13.11; 1.13.13; 2.16.19; Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 70; I. John Hesselink, *Calvin's First Catechism: A Commentary* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997), 216 n.1; Wilhelm Niesel, *The Theology of Calvin*, trans. Harold Knight (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1980), 9-21, 246-50; François Wendel, *Calvin*, 126, 166-8; Oh-Gab Lee, "Calvin's the Doctrine of Creation," 72; Alexandre Ganoczy, *The Young Calvin* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1987), 185-94; Peter A. Lillback, "Ethics: The Christian Life and Good Works according to Calvin (2.10-11)," in *A Theological Guide to Calvin's Institutes: Essays and Analysis*, ed. David W. Hall and Peter A. Lillback (Phillipsburg, New Jersey: P&R Publishing Company, 2008), 168-204; Burk Parsons, "The Humility of Calvin's Calvinism," in *John Calvin: A Heart for Devotion, Doctrine, and Doxology*, ed. Burk Parsons (Lake Mary, FL: Reformation Trust, 2008), 1-17; Eric J. Alexander, "The Supremacy of Jesus Christ," in *John Calvin: A Heart for Devotion, Doctrine, and Doxology*, ed. Burk Parsons (Lake Mary, FL: Reformation Trust, 2008), 109-18; I. John Hesselink, "Pneumatology," 299-300; Matthias Freudenberg, "Calvin's Reception in the Twentieth Century," in *The Calvin Handbook*, ed. Herman J. Selderhuis, trans. Judith J. Guder, Henry J. Baron, Randi H. Lundell, and Gerrit W. Sheeres (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 500-2.

⁶⁴ Cf. Eric J. Alexander, "The Supremacy of Jesus Christ," 109-18; Matthias Freudenberg, "Calvin's Reception in the Twentieth Century," 500-2.

of sources? It might be deduced that Calvin, who had led the Reformation through the ‘*Trinity-centric theology in Christ*,’ which grounded soteriology on Scripture, had not dealt with “union with Christ,” which is a central thought of soteriology and a core thought of the New Testament, only as a doctrine.

Furthermore, if the soteriology was the centre of the controversy in the Reformation period, as a matter of course, the “union with Christ” thought, as the core of soteriology, should have been an important notion in Calvin’s theology, and should have played a central role throughout his whole theology. For this reason, this dissertation will deal with “Calvin’s Trinity-centric ‘union with Christ thought’” through the Holy Spirit as his “theological methodology.”

The Trinity-centric theological methodology through the Holy Spirit or Trinitarian-structured “union with Christ” thought in Calvin’s theology will be used as a methodological lens in re-interpreting and re-evaluating Calvin’s theology much more precisely. This thought has been treated mainly as only a ‘doctrinal aspect’ in Korean Reformed and American Calvinist theology, and has never been exposed to scrutiny as a theological methodology in those two theological traditions. For this reason “union with Christ” seems to have been confined to a doctrinal scope in soteriology. But, if we deal with “union with Christ” thought not only as a ‘doctrine’ but as a ‘theological methodology,’ its original meaning, comprehensiveness, importance, and the relationship to other doctrines will surface.

1.5. Delimitation of the Research

This dissertation’s main theme is the original scope, location, content and importance of the “union with Christ” thought in Calvin’s theology. But it is also a fact that “union with Christ” has been dealt with mainly as a doctrine in soteriology because of a specific understanding of its meaning. Even though both American Calvinistic theology and Korean Reformed theology have grappled ceaselessly with theological development and research of this thought, there is still an unfortunate neglect of its importance. As a core of Christian doctrine and the New Testament it has been de-emphasized, reducing much its original theological ‘scope’ and ‘importance’ in these two Reformed theological traditions.

Both of these two Reformed theologies have dealt with the thought only as a doctrine in soteriology and ecclesiology (pertaining especially to the doctrine of sacraments). In fact, we are able to discover that Calvin’s “union with Christ” thought is treated inter-

relatedly to other doctrines in his theology, so that the “union with Christ” thought is seen to be close to other doctrines through its structure, content and scope.

In order to re-evaluate the original scope and importance of Calvin’s “union with Christ” thought, this dissertation will research the following two core themes intensively: Firstly, this dissertation will deal with the limitation of scope and the neglect of Calvin’s “union with Christ” thought in Korean Reformed and American Calvinistic theology. Secondly, this dissertation will research the “union with Christ” thought’s original scope, frequency, structure, relationship with other doctrines, and contents as dealt with extensively in Calvin’s theology.

From this viewpoint, I will divide each chapter into the following sub-themes, and then deal with Calvin’s “union with Christ” thought in more depth. In the second chapter, I will investigate Calvin’s “union with Christ” thought as it found reception in Korean Reformed theology. In Chapter Two (of Part One) I will analyze the main causes that its ‘scope’ and ‘importance’ were reduced in Korean Reformed theology. In Chapter Three I will examine the main causes of the limited interpretation of the “union with Christ” thought in American Calvinism, because the Korean Reformed version is related inseparably to a strong and direct influence from American Calvinistic theology.

In the second and third parts, I will research Calvin’s “union with Christ” thought intensively, thus addressing the central theme of this dissertation. In the second part, I will deal with the various metaphorical expressions and meanings of the “union with Christ” thought in greater detail, given that this is one of the representative features that have been dealt with comprehensively in Calvin’s theology. In order to demonstrate the comprehensiveness of the scope of “union with Christ” in the *Institutes*, I will deal with the various notions’ metaphorical expressions of the thought in detail, especially in Chapter Four of Part Two. Moreover, I will present not only the various metaphorical expressions of “union with Christ” thought, but also the various theological themes or doctrines that have dealt with its interconnection in Calvin’s theology.

In Chapter Five I will investigate the meanings of the “union with Christ” thought as it features in Calvin’s theology. When considering the various metaphorical expressions for the “union with Christ” as being inter-connected to other theological themes according to the conceptual definition in more detail in Chapter Four, I will focus on explaining the thought’s biblical and theological meanings in Chapter Five. In order to understand the various meanings of the “union with Christ” thought, its structural and semantic connections are also of vital importance. Research into the meanings of the “union with Christ” thought in greater

detail will strive to verify that this thought as a central to Calvin's whole theology.

In Part Three I will analyze the theological structure of the *Institutes* from the viewpoint of "union with Christ," and then conduct intensive research into the doctrinal scope of the thought. In Chapter Six of Part Three I will deal with the close relationship between the structure of the *Institutes* and the "union with Christ" thought. The fact that this thought also assumes a structural core role in Calvin's theology will be verified in more detail. In Chapter Seven, I will deal with the doctrinal scope of the "union with Christ" thought in Calvin's theology. I will research in greater depth how the thought operates in the relationship between the other doctrines and also how it is treated as a 'tool' or a 'principle' of interpretation in other doctrines.

I will therefore deal with the features, content, scope, and frequency of the "union with Christ" thought that Calvin emphasized in his theology. In order to prove the comprehensiveness of "union with Christ" thought, I will re-interpret, rediscover and demonstrate that the thought was not dealt with only as a 'doctrine,' but rather as operating as a '*central thought*' in Calvin's theology. Moreover, I will deal with the inter-relationship between Calvin's "union with Christ" thought and his theological features, including the structure of his *Institute*, and then re-evaluate the significance hereof.

In the eighth and last chapter, as part of the conclusion, I will summarize the research results of this dissertation, and re-evaluate the present place and function of Calvin's "union with Christ" thought in Korean Reformed theology. Accordingly, in order to enlarge the theological and doctrinal 'scope' and 'importance' of Calvin's "union with Christ" thought, I will present the contours of theological proposals that can be developed in Korean Reformed theology.

1.6. Aims and Benefits of Research

What is the principal aim of this research? I cite François Wendel's following statement, which is almost identical to my research aim:

The aim of the present work is at once more modest and more ambitious. It does not claim to adduce any sensational novelties or unprecedented interpretations. It seeks to supply, in some measure, a genuine need, to fill a rather surprising gap.⁶⁵

⁶⁵ François Wendel, *Calvin*, 10.

Similar to Wendel's statement, the main aim of this dissertation is to *re-illuminate* Calvin's Reformed theology.

This dissertation argues that the "union with Christ" *thought*, to which Calvin refers in his theological work, is rooted more deeply, and has been examined more extensively, aligning various doctrines that are the foundations of belief, than the *doctrine* of "union with Christ," as dealt with in Korean Reformed and American Reformed theology (or Calvinistic theology). Therefore, it is important and necessary for us to examine the original meaning, comprehensiveness, and relationship to other doctrines of the "union with Christ" thought, and then to re-interpret and re-evaluate Calvin's theology. Simultaneously this will offer us practical help in enlarging our theological domain and making our faith more abundant.

CHAPTER TWO

Korean Reformed Theology and Calvin's “Union with Christ” Thought

The reception process of the early Korean Protestant Church and Reformed theology can be described with reference to both mono-causal and multi-causal explanations. The idea of multi-causality or complexity refers to the various reception routes associated with Calvin reception in Korea,¹ before the direct mission was launched in 1884 by the first missionaries in Korea, H. N. Allen, H. G. Underwood (from the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A) and H. G. Appenzeller (from the Methodist Episcopal Church in the U.S.A).²

Those indirect Protestant church receptions feature a complexity related to the Catholic Church's reception process and work in Korea. This process began in 1594,³ with its social influences in Korea,⁴ missionary journeys of European Protestant Church missionaries who were working in China,⁵ and the Bible distribution work by Korean visitors who had been contacted by Western missionaries in China and in Japan.⁶

The early reception of the Protestant Church in Korea was through missionaries who were sent mostly from America, Canada, Australia, and England,⁷ and the early settler Protestant denominations in Korea were the Presbyterian Church, Methodist Church,

¹ The Institute of Korean Church History Studies, *A History of Korean Church*, Vol. 1 (16C. - 1918) (Seoul: The Christian Literature Press, 1989), 1-125.

² Dohong Jou, “The divided Land and Confessio Coreana,” in *International Congress of Reformed and Presbyterian Churches' academic conference: Revival and Unity of Reformed Churches*, ed. The Preparation committee of ICRRefC (Seoul: Chongshin University, 2013), 594-5; Namjoon Kim, “How Korean Churches Have Grown and What Future Role They Must Play,” in *International Congress of Reformed and Presbyterian Churches' academic conference: Revival and Unity of Reformed Churches*, ed. The Preparation committee of ICRRefC (Seoul: Chongshin University, 2013), 610.

³ Sunkyu Huh, “The Korean Christian Church Analyzed in Terms of Reformation Theology” (A Project Presented, The Faculty of the School of Theology at Claremont, 1975), 1-5.

⁴ In-Sub Ahn, “Calvin in Asia,” in *The Calvin Handbook*, ed. Herman J. Selderhuis, trans. Judith J. Guder, Henry J. Baron, Randi H. Lundell, and Gerrit W. Sheeres (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 516-7.

⁵ The Institute of Korean Church History Studies, *A History of Korean Church*, Vol. 1, 129-41.

⁶ Jong-Yoon Lee, “Calvin and Korean Presbyterian Church's Growth and Task,” in *A Commemorative Academic Conference for the 500 Anniversary of Calvin: Calvin and Korean Church (1)*, ed. Myung-Jun Ahn (Seoul: SFC Publication, 2010), 42-44.

⁷ Seong-Won Park, “The Social and Economic Impact of John Calvin on the Korean Church and Society,” in *John Calvin Rediscovered: His Social and Economic Thought (Princeton Theological Seminary Studies in Reformed Theology and History)*, ed. Edward Dommen, James D. Bratt (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2007), 109. The early reception of the Protestant Church in Korea was through missionaries mostly from America, Canada, Australia, and England.

Anglican Church, Salvation Army, Holiness Church, Baptist Church, etc.⁸ We can indicate the historical origins of the main Protestant Church's denominations in Korea as follows: The North Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. in 1884; the Methodist Episcopal Church in the U.S.A. in 1885; the Presbyterian Church in Australia in 1889; the Anglican Church in England in 1889; the South Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. in 1892; the South Methodist Episcopal Church in the U.S.A. in 1895; the Baptist Church in U.S.A. in 1895; the Presbyterian Church in Canada in 1889; the Holiness Church in U.S.A. in 1907; and the Salvation Army in England in 1908.⁹ We can explain this plurality on the grounds that it had entered via various countries, diverse denominations, and various historical periods.

On the other hand, there seems to be a definite mono-causality or unitarity in the reception process of the early Korean Protestant Church and Reformed theology. In this case unitarity refers to 'theological education.'¹⁰ The early Korean Protestant Church settled on 'denominational theological education' from the times of early mission, because the various denominations aimed to train and cultivate their own denominational pastors.

Therefore, it had not set out as a 'denomination-transcending theological seminary' from the beginning, but rather as a 'denominational theological seminary.' Especially Reformed theology seems to contain an obvious unitary denominational focus from the early reception process, because 'Pyeong-Yang Presbyterian Theological Seminary' was established as a unitary theological seminary through the integration of four Presbyterian missions, viz. the North Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., the South Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., the Australia Presbyterian Church, and the Canada Presbyterian Church.¹¹

In this chapter I will illuminate Calvin's theology as it was received in Korea. It will be analyzed intensively from the aspect of the "union with Christ (*unio cum Christo*)" thought, indicating the inter-relationship between Calvin's theology and Korean Reformed theology. Afterwards, I will also deal with American Calvinistic version of the "union with Christ" thought, because it impacted forcefully on the reception process and development of Korean Calvinistic theology. From this point of view, if we fail to analyze Calvin's doctrine

⁸ The Institute of Korean Church History Studies, *A History of Korean Church*, Vol. 1, 185-94. The early settler Protestant denominations in Korea were the Presbyterian Church, Methodist Church, Anglican Church, Salvation Army, Holiness Church, Baptist Church, etc.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ About the early theological education of Korean Christianity, see Harvie M. Conn, "Studies in the Theology of the Korean Presbyterian Church: An Historical Outline," *The Westminster Theological Journal*, Vol. 29 (1966 - 1967).

¹¹ Changwon Shu, "Puritanism in Presbyterian Church in Korea," in *International Congress of Reformed and Presbyterian Churches' academic conference: Revival and Unity of Reformed Churches*, ed. The Preparation committee of ICRFC (Seoul: Chongshin University, 2013), 1006-7.

of “union with Christ” as located in American Calvinistic theology, it will be very difficult to analyze the doctrine of “union with Christ” precisely and accurately as it occurs in Korean Calvinistic theology.

2.1. The Reception of Calvinistic Theology in Korea and Calvin’s “union with Christ” thought

The reception of Calvinistic theology in early Korean Protestantism proceeded practically through ‘The Presbyterian Theological Seminary of Cho-Sun,’ established in 1901 at Pyeong Yang City. It is not clear how many people accepted the Calvinistic theology in Korea, because before the existence of Pyeong Yang Seminary, each missionary arbitrarily provided theological education to Korean evangelists in a form of informal theological classes. We may assume that this provided a weak level of Calvinistic theology, because the informal theological class operated mainly as a short term theological education during the winter season, lasting about 1-2 months.¹²

The Presbyterian Theological Seminary of Cho-Sun was named ‘Pyeong Yang Seminary,’ because it was in Pyeong Yang City. The theological education of the early Presbyterian Theological Seminary of Cho-Sun, ‘Pyeong Yang Seminary,’ was conducted by American missionaries,¹³ who were all typical conservative Calvinists.¹⁴ This fact is exposed the following report about the theological origins of the American missionaries who worked in the early Korean Reformed Church:

The Annual Report (1922) of the Korean Mission, Presbyterian Church, U.S.A., gives information concerning the training of these missionaries. Among the forty ordained men serving in Korea at that time, seven seminaries are represented. Princeton comes first with 16 men, McCormick next with 11, San Anselmo with 4 and Union, New York, with 3.¹⁵

We gather that Korean Reformed theology had completely accepted American Calvinistic theology, having received a determining influence of American Calvinism from

¹² Harvie M. Conn, “Studies in the Theology of the Korean Presbyterian Church,” Vol. 29, 33-4.

¹³ Kwangyeol Kim, “A Discussion on the Doctrine of Sanctification in the ‘Chong-Shin’ Tradition,” in *International Congress of Reformed and Presbyterian Churches’ academic conference: Revival and Unity of Reformed Churches*, ed. The Preparation committee of ICRRefC (Seoul: Chongshin University, 2013), 538-41.

¹⁴ Harvie M. Conn, “Studies in the Theology of the Korean Presbyterian Church,” Vol. 29, 32-8.

¹⁵ Korea Mission, Presbyterian Church, U.S.A., Annual Reports, 1922, p. 22. It was quoted from Harvie M. Conn’s treatise.

the beginning. Afterwards Korean theologians who had studied in foreign countries continued in theological education partially from 1928,¹⁶ with an increase in their numbers after 1930. The representative Korean Presbyterian theologians from foreign countries were: Koong-Hyuk Nam, Nak-Joon Back, Hyung-Nong Park, Seong-Hyee Lee, Chang-Keun Song, Pheel-Keun Chae, Chae-Choon Kim, In-Koo Youn, and Yune-Sun Park,¹⁷ and the leading role of theological education by Korean theologians was related to the misfortune that Pyeong Yang Seminary was forcibly closed and the American missionaries were repatriated by Japanese imperialism in 1940.¹⁸

From the 1945 Korean liberation onwards, Calvinistic theology was accepted and developed thoroughly by Korean theologians beyond the dependence on foreign missionaries, but the predominant theological inclination remained an extension of the influence of conservative American Calvinistic theology. This resulted in Calvin's "union with Christ" thought being accepted directly into Korean Reformed theology without any theological debate or any filtering process.¹⁹

Unfortunately the Reformed Theology that was accepted in Korea became fragmented three times from the latter half of the 1940s to the latter half of the 1950s,²⁰ and those periods' theological disunion of Korean Reformed theology matched the American Calvinistic theology's theological disunion.²¹ The theological inclinations that were developed can be divided into the conservative Reformed theology, the Reformed theology of the neutral-line, and the progressive (or moderate) Reformed theology,²² but the theological influence of the pioneering Calvinist theologians has remained dominant, even until the

¹⁶ Ibid., 138. Dr. Koong-Hyuk Nam participated into theological education of Pyeong Yang Seminary as the first Korean lecturer in 1928.

¹⁷ Sanggyoo Lee, "Calvin Study in Korea: How Calvin has been accepted and studied in Korea?," in *A Commemorative Academic Conference for the 500 Anniversary of Calvin: Calvin and Korean Church(1)*, ed. Myung-Jun Ahn (Seoul: SFC Publication, 2010), 272-3.

¹⁸ S. K. Chung, *A Study on Calvinism* (Seoul: Chongshin Publishing Company, 2003), 18, 138-42.

¹⁹ Dongmin Chang, "The life and Theology of Dr. Hyung-Nong Park (1897-1978)," in *International Congress of Reformed and Presbyterian Churches' academic conference: Revival and Unity of Reformed Churches*, ed. The Preparation committee of ICRRefC (Seoul: Chongshin University, 2013), 81-3.

²⁰ The Institute of Korean Church History Studies, *A History of Korean Church*, Vol. 2 (Seoul: The Christian Literature Press, 1990), 154-61.

²¹ See Myung Ryoung Kim, *The Theology of Karl Barth* (Seoul: Ire Publishing Company, 2007), 311-20. See also Scott Manetsch, "Calvin in America," in *The Calvin Handbook*, ed. Herman J. Selderhuis, trans. Judith J. Guder, Henry J. Baron, Randi H. Lundell, and Gerrit W. Sheeres (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 523-5.

²² In-Sub Ahn, "A History of Calvin Reception in Korea," in *International Congress of Reformed and Presbyterian Churches' academic conference: Revival and Unity of Reformed Churches*, ed. The Preparation committee of ICRRefC (Seoul: Chongshin University, 2013), 873-9; those disparate leanings in Korean Reformed theology could be classified as denominations or as theological seminaries. On the other hand, they are classified along with their theological pioneers as the school of Hyung-Nong Park, the school of Jong-Sung Lee, the school of Chae-Choon Kim and the school of Yune-Sun Park.

present time.²³

Therefore, if one researches the representative theologians who were involved influentially in Calvinistic theology's reception and development in Korea, we can expect at least the following two outcomes: Firstly, it will be discovered what the Calvinistic theological inclination is, as accepted and developed in Korea. Secondly, we should be able to understand the present state of Calvin's "union with Christ" thought. In addition, for an intensive analysis of the representative theologians who influenced the Calvinistic theological reception and development in Korea, their work will be interpreted in relation to Calvin's "union with Christ" thought.

2.1.1. The Early American Missionaries and Calvin's "Union with Christ" Thought

Pyeong Yang Seminary was established by Dr. Samuel A. Moffett, who was sent from the North Presbyterian Church in the USA. He had graduated from the McCormick Theological Seminary and the Princeton Theological Seminary, and was a typical Calvinist. Furthermore, systematic theology was accepted in the Pyeong Yang Seminary by him from the beginning.²⁴ Moffett graduated with a BTh and MTh from McCormick Theological Seminary, and received a DTh from Princeton Theological Seminary.

At that time lecturers or professors in the two Theological Seminaries were conservative Calvinistic theologians, hence Moffett certainly also adhered to the conservative inclination of Calvinistic theology while he worked at Pyeong Yang Seminary as Dean for 23 years. In fact, Moffett lectured in Systematic Theology and Catechism from 1901 to 1933 in Pyeong Yang Seminary (thus for 33 years).²⁵ As a result, the Reformed Theology in Korea strongly accepted the conservative American Calvinistic theology from its early period, and continued to develop under its influence.²⁶

After Moffett, systematic theology was taught at Pyeong Yang Seminary by Dr. William D. Reynolds and Dr. John C. Crane. Reynolds' working period as a lecturer of systematic theology lasted for 14 years from 1924 to 1937. His successor, Dr. J. C. Crane,

²³ On the influence of representative theologians of the early Korean Reformed theology, see Sanggyoo Lee, "Calvin Study in Korea," 289-91.

²⁴ C. A. Clark, "Memories of Sixty Years (1954)," in *All Our Family in the House*, ed. Allen D. Clark (Minneapolis, MN: Privately typewritten, 1975), 253.

²⁵ S. K. Chung, *A Study on Calvinism*, 142-51.

²⁶ Harvie M. Conn, "Studies in the Theology of the Korean Presbyterian Church," Vol. 29, 32-8.

lectured in Systematic Theology for 14 years from 1937 to 1950 (until the Korean War). The teaching careers of these two theologians spanned more than 28 years. Those two early systematic theologians had graduated at the Old Union Theological Seminary, at that time, a Seminary of the comparatively conservative Calvinistic Theological inclination.²⁷

Reynolds prescribed the book, ‘Systematic Theology’²⁸ for his lectures at Pyeong Yang Seminary, that he had written based on Charles W. Hodge’s ‘Systematic Theology Vol. 3.’ The theological text book that was used by W. D. Reynolds while he lectured Systematic Theology in Pyeong Yang Seminary was from Chia Yu Ming’s *Systematic Theology*, which Reynolds translated. Ming, who was a Chinese theologian, wrote the *Systematic Theology*, which consisted of six volumes, based on the books of typical Calvinists such as Charles Hodge, A.A. Hodge and A.H Strong. This fact is presented in Kwangyeol Kim’s treatise, “A Discussion on the Doctrine of Sanctification in the ‘Chong-Shin’ Tradition,” as follows:

Ming’s *Systematic Theology* was written on the basis of the contents of ‘*Systematic Theology*’ by Charles Hodge, who was an American Calvinistic theologian of conservative inclination, and ‘*Outlines of Theology*’ by A. A. Hodge, and ‘*Systematic Theology*’ by A. H. Strong, who was a conservative theologian of the American Baptist Church.²⁹

According to Jong-Sung Lee, the starting point of theological education was the appointment of W. D. Reynolds as a lecturer of Systematic Theology in Pyeong Yang Seminary. If he is right, Reynolds’ teaching career in Systematic Theology in Pyeong Yang Seminary should be considered to have lasted 29 years. If so, the level of influence of Reynolds on the early theological formation of Calvinistic Theology gains in importance.³⁰

On the other hand, John C. Crane wrote and used a more systematic book of systematic theology than his predecessor, but also this text book was based on American Calvinistic theologians’ systematic theology.³¹ The American Calvinistic theologians to whom John C. Crane referred in his book included Louis Berkhof, Charles Hodge, B. B.

²⁷ Kwangyeol Kim, “A Discussion on the Doctrine of Sanctification in the ‘Chong-Shin’ Tradition,” 539-55.

²⁸ Chia Yu Ming, *Systematic Theology*, Vols. 6 (1931), foreword. It is quoted from Jong-Sung Lee’s “An Influence of Reformed Theology in Korean Church.”

²⁹ Kwangyeol Kim, “A Discussion on the Doctrine of Sanctification in the ‘Chong-Shin’ Tradition,” 541.

³⁰ Jong-Sung Lee, “An Influence of Reformed Theology in Korean Church,” in *Korea Presbyterian Journal of Theology* (Seoul: Presbyterian College and Theological Seminary Press, 1987), 107.

³¹ Harvie M. Conn, “Studies in the Theology of the Korean Presbyterian Church,” Vol. 29, 44-5.

Warfield, Robert L. Dabney, and Wilhelmus G. T. Shedd.³²

As a result, the early Korean Reformed theology was forged under the overwhelming influence of the conservatively inclined American Calvinistic theology. At this time the possibility of developing a critical faculty was seen to be an advantage, as Crane's statement proves:

It has been the writer's privilege to teach the basic doctrines of the Reformed Faith to Korean students during most of his thirty years in Korea, and both with undergraduates in Bible schools and with Seminary students... *It is with faith in this interest and ability of present day Korean students, and in the basic strength of Reformed Theology that he has endeavored to differentiate between that statement and modern divergences therefrom.* The return from extreme Liberalism, with its emphasis upon human sufficiency through experience to determine all truth, has made the task more challenging and interesting³³ (own emphasis).

Korean Reformed theology took as its theological framework their biblical-centric and Calvinistic theology in this period. Herbert E. Blair's mission report on Pyeong Yang Seminary of that period, gives proof as well that Korean Reformed theology had accepted unconditionally the biblical-centric and Calvinistic theology of the American missionaries.³⁴

Yet at that stage Calvin's "union with Christ" thought was accorded much less significance than the American Calvinistic theology; scrutiny of those theologians' doctrine of sanctification as part of systematic theology shows that there is no emphasis on the importance of the "union with Christ" thought (or doctrine). For example, W. D. Reynolds dealt with the doctrine of sanctification in Pneumatology (5 vol.) of his *Systematic Theology*, which was Chia Yu Ming's translation of *Systematic Theology*, and John C. Crane also dealt with the doctrine of sanctification in *Soteriology II* (Pneumatology – Salvation in

³² Kwangyeol Kim, "A Discussion on the Doctrine of Sanctification in the 'Chong-Shin' Tradition," 547-9.

³³ John C. Crane, *Systematic Theology a Compilation* (Specialized Printing Company, 1953), Preface. It is quoted from Kwangyeol Kim's "A Discussion on the Doctrine of Sanctification in the 'Chong-Shin' Tradition."

³⁴ Herbert E. Blair, "Report of the 50th Anniversary Celebration of the Korea Mission of the U.S.A. Presbyterian Church" (June 30-July 3, 1934), 187. It is quoted from Duk-Sung Choi's "Hyung-Nong Park and Reformed Orthodox Theology." See also John C. Crane, *Systematic Theology a Compilation*, Preface. It is extracted from Kwangyeol Kim's "A Discussion on the Doctrine of Sanctification in the 'Chong-Shin' Tradition."

³⁴ Herbert E. Blair, "Report of the 50th Anniversary Celebration of the Korea Mission of the U.S.A. Presbyterian Church," 187. It is quoted from Duk-Sung Choi's treatise "Hyung-Nong Park and Reformed Orthodox Theology."

Experience), but it contained no emphasis on Calvin's "union with Christ" thought.³⁵

However, the central thought of Calvin's doctrine of sanctification is definitely "union with Christ."³⁶ Excluding the "union with Christ" makes it impossible to explain Calvin's doctrine of sanctification. Therefore, we are able to know that Calvin's "union with Christ" thought was accepted only slightly in Korean Reformed theology from the reception period in the beginning, because the importance of "union with Christ" was neglected in the doctrine of sanctification of the early Pyeong Yang Seminary's theologians, and this oversight of the conservative American Calvinistic theology became embedded. The "union with Christ" was understood only as a simple doctrine of soteriology.

As that result, we can discover that the "union with Christ" thought, treated so comprehensively in Calvin's theology, has been dealt with as a simple doctrine of soteriology in Korean Reformed theology from the early period. In consequence, their insignificant application and nonchalance about Calvin's "union with Christ" continued as a theological structural limitation in Korean Reformed theology from then onwards.

2.1.2. Dr. Hyung-Nong Park (1897-1978) and Calvin's "Union with Christ" Thought

Hyung-Nong Park was a conservative Calvinistic theologian, and the first author who wrote a book of *Systematic Theology* in Korean. His conservative Calvinistic theological inclination had been formed directly by the theological influence of theologians such as J. Gresham Machen and Charles W. Hodge, when he studied at Princeton Theological Seminary.³⁷ Therefore, because of the very close theological relationship between Hyung-Nong Park and Machen, Park is named the "Korean Machen."³⁸ Indirectly, his theological inclination was informed through the American Calvinistic theologians' books of *Systematic Theology*, such as that of Louis Berkhof.³⁹

³⁵ This part is indebted to Kwangyeol Kim's treatise as "A Discussion on the Doctrine of Sanctification in the 'Chong-Shin' Tradition." Kim, in turn, also depended on Jong-Sung Lee's "An Influence of Reformed Theology in Korean Church," because it was very hard to access the original books directly.

³⁶ About the fact that Calvin's "union with Christ" is a central thought (or core thought) of the doctrine of sanctification, see the following: Günther H. Haas, "Ethics and Church Discipline," in *The Calvin Handbook*, ed. Herman J. Selderhuis, trans. Judith J. Guder, Henry J. Baron, Randi H. Lundell, and Gerrit W. Sheeres (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 332-5.

³⁷ Dongmin Chang, "The life and Theology of Dr. Hyung-Nong Park (1897-1978)," 69.

³⁸ Duk-Sung Choi, "Hyung-Nong Park and Reformed Orthodox Theology," in *The Institute of Korean Reformed Theology Opus, Vol. 21: Re-illumination for Hyung-Nong Park's Reformed Belief*, ed. The Institute of Korean Reformed Theology (Seoul: Fire and Cloud Publishing Company, 2007), 119.

³⁹ Bong-Geun Cho, "A Research about Christology of Calvin and Korean Presbyterian Church," in *A*

Dong Min Chang evaluates Hyung-Nong Park's influence in the relationship between Korean Reformed theology and Park in the following manner: "Generally speaking, the Korean conservative church has had the same way of doing as Park's."⁴⁰ Even Myung Ryong Kim generally evaluates Hyung-Nong Park negatively, but he evaluates positively Park's theological influence in Korean Reformed theology in the following way: "There has been deeply rooted a Fundamentalism's theology in Korean Presbyterian Church by the influence of Hyung-Nong Park."⁴¹

Even Hyung-Nong Park was a meritorious theologian who accepted a Calvinistic theology by following in the footsteps of the tradition of American Calvinists of that time. In the strict meaning of the word, however, he did not research Calvin directly.⁴² Hyung-Nong Park clarified his books in the Preface in the following words: "I wrote this book on the basis of Louis Berkhof's *Systematic Theology* (in 1941), and also I collected theological references from other Reformed theologians, and then summed up it and wrote."⁴³

More accurately, Hyung-Nong Park understood Calvin from the viewpoint of the American theologians who were conservatively inclined, such as J. Gresham Machen and Louis Berkhof.⁴⁴ In-Sub Ahn makes Park's theological inclination clear in the following words:

His theological argument was clear. According to him, "I (Hyung-Nong Park) intend to receive the Calvinistic tradition and bring it as plainly as I receive it." He emphasized that he just aimed to deliver the theology which the western missionaries had delivered... Park understood Calvin through the eyes of J. G. Machen and L. Berkof.⁴⁵ (own parenthesis).

Nevertheless, it is a fact that his theological influence is deeply rooted in Korean Reformed theology, and has affected it significantly, whether directly or indirectly until the present. In Dong-Min Chang's positive evaluation of Hyung-Nong Park's theological influence, he confirms this in the following manner:

Commemorative Academic Conference for the 500 Anniversary of Calvin: Calvin and Korean Church(1), ed. Myung-Jun Ahn (Seoul: SFC Publication, 2010), 215.

⁴⁰ Dongmin Chang, "The life and Theology of Dr. Hyung-Nong Park (1897-1978)," 83.

⁴¹ Myung Ryong Kim, *The Theology of Karl Barth*, 318.

⁴² S. K. Chung, *A Study on Calvinism*, 138.

⁴³ Hyung-Nong Park, *Systematic Theology: Vol. 4, Christology* (Seoul: Eoun-Sung Publishing Company, 1970), Preface.

⁴⁴ Jong-Sung Lee, "Hyung-Nong Park and Korean Reformed Theology," *Theological Thought: Vol. Summer, in 1979* (Seoul: The Institute of Korean Reformed Theology, 1979), 250-4.

⁴⁵ In-Sub Ahn, "A History of Calvin Reception in Korea," 874. See also Hyung-Nong Park, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 1 (Seoul: The Institute of Korean Reformed Theology, 1988), Preface; Hyung-Nong Park, *Opus XIII: Theological Treatise 1* (Seoul: The Institute of Korean Reformed Theology, 1978), 217.

Many theologians would not hesitate to single out Dr. Hyung-Nong Park, if they were asked to choose one most influential theologian throughout the history of the Korean Presbyterian church. One of the reasons is that he was the author of twenty volumes of *Collected Writings of Dr. Hyung-Nong Park*, covering doctrinal theology (7 vol.), review of the modern theologies, apologetics, collections of theological articles and sermons. He has been called one of the ‘two stars’ of the Korean church, the other of whom was Dr. Yune-Sun Park, who wrote a twenty-volume commentary on the whole books of the Bible. *Hyung-Nong Park precedes any theologians in all respects, in the excellence of scholarship, in the theological legacy and in the influences to the whole Korean church.* I am not exaggerating when I say Park has formed the faith and style of the Korean conservative church as well as her theology⁴⁶ (own emphasis).

These evaluations of Hyung-Nong Park’s theology conflict directly with each other. A negative evaluation of his theology can be summarized in the following manner: He absolutely trusted the theology of American missionaries, and had a theologically subordinate relationship with Korean Reformed theology. His Korean Reformed theology withered and died, because he followed and copied only the American Calvinistic theological structures and contents, such as that of Louis Berkhof. In addition, he insisted on an authorization and an inspiration of the Bible bordering on Bibliolatry.⁴⁷

If we synthesize both the positive and the negative evaluations of Hyung-Nong Park’s theology from the viewpoint of Calvin’s “union with Christ” thought, we realize that the thought was accepted very superficially and in a limiting manner in his theology, which did not research Calvin’s primary sources systematically. Hyung-Nong Park’s theology reveals an almost complete absence of any recognition of the “union with Christ” thought, ignoring the aspects of its scope, contents, and frequency.

Especially, if we analyze Park’s ‘soteriology,’ which is contained in the first part of his book that is related to “union with Christ,” it is only 14 pages of the total 426 pages, and it has almost been omitted in his other systematic theological books. In comparison, the “union with Christ” thought has been dealt with so comprehensively in Calvin’s *Institutes* that we can deduce that it is exceedingly significant. The frequency of referring to Calvin’s original texts (or primary sources) is limited to only 26 times, and references related to “union with

⁴⁶ Dongmin Chang, “The life and Theology of Dr. Hyung-Nong Park (1897-1978),” 63.

⁴⁷ Jong-Sung Lee, “Hyung-Nong Park and Korean Reformed Theology,” 249-59; Hyung-Ki Lee, “The Theological coordinates of Presbyterian Theological Seminary,” in *Korea Presbyterian Journal of Theology*, Vol. 1, November in 1985 (Seoul: Presbyterian Theological Seminary Press, 1985): 18. It is quoted from Chun-Suk Yoon’s treatise.

Christ” are completely absent. Park does, however, introduce the importance of “union with Christ” in Calvin’s soteriology, albeit indirectly and briefly. On the contrary, the frequency of secondary references related to the “union with Christ” thought to Calvinistic theologians such as Charles Hodge, A. A. Hodge, and so forth, totals 14 times.⁴⁸

This shows that Park’s theology has its limits for a systematic research on Calvin’s own theology, since it lacks recognition of the importance of Calvin’s “union with Christ” thought. More specifically, Calvin deals with it intensively as a crucial theological principle in his soteriology and the doctrine of Sacrament. From that viewpoint, what does it mean that the references related to “union with Christ” are completely absent in Park’s *Soteriology: Systematic Theology*? It clarifies Hyung-Nong Park’s lack of acknowledging the importance of the “union with Christ” thought, and viewed in the perspective of his contribution to Korean Reformed theology, the absence of this recognition presents a structural limitation.

2.1.3. Dr. Yune-Sun Park (1905-1988) and Calvin’s “Union with Christ” Thought

Yune-Sun Park is a representative Calvinistic theologian who, besides Hyung-Nong Park, is considered one of the greatest theologians in Korean Reformed theology.⁴⁹ Yune-Sun Park was influenced theologically directly by J. Gresham Machen and C. Van Til, conservative Calvinistic theologians at Westminster Theological Seminary at that time. Another influence came from the theological books of A. Kuyper and H. Bavinck, Dutch Calvinistic theologians, who was also received in the United States in a specific way.⁵⁰

Yune-Sun Park’s theological thought played an influential role in shaping Korean Reformed theology into the mould of conservative Calvinism, and it has continued to exert influence in Korean Reformed theology.⁵¹ In-Sub Ahn makes Park’s theological inclination and his theological influence clear in the following words:

⁴⁸ Hyung-Nong Park, *Soteriology: Systematic Theology*, Vol. 5 (Seoul: Korean Christianity Educational Institute, 1983).

⁴⁹ Chi-Mo Hong, “Yune-Sun Park’s Life and Theological Thought,” in *Yune-Sun Park’s Theology and Korean Theology*, ed. The Academy of Christianity (Seoul: The Academy of Christianity, 1993), 8. It is quoted from Kwang-Won Yoon’s treatise.

⁵⁰ Harvie M. Conn, “Studies in the Theology of the Korean Presbyterian Church: An Historical Outline,” *The Westminster Theological Journal*, Vol. 30 (1967 - 1968): 137; Yune-Sun Park, *The Bible and My Life* (Seoul: Yung Eum Sa, 1992), 58-87. It is quoted from Kwang-Won Yoon’s treatise.

⁵¹ Kwang-Won Yoon, “Chung-Ahm Dr. Yune-Sun Park’s Life and Biblical Hermeneutics,” in *Calvin Theology and Korean Theology*, ed. Myung-Jun Ahn (Seoul: Ki-Ppeun-Nal Publishing Company, 2009), 465; Yune-Sun Park, “The Korean Church and Westminster Seminary,” *The Presbyterian Guardian*, April, 1939, 71. It is quoted from Harvie M. Conn’s treatise.

Dr. Y. S. Park tried to be a pioneer to spread the thoughts of Abraham Kuyper and Herman Bavinck into Korea. Since he studied both in the Westminster Theological Seminary in U.S.A. and the Free University in the Netherlands, he could introduce the Calvinism of the Netherlands and of the U.S.A. to the Korean Churches.⁵²

Yune-Sun Park annotated the entire books of the New and Old Testaments thoroughly from the viewpoint of Calvinism. His influence as a systematic theologian also holds a very important position in Korean Reformed theology,⁵³ because he lectured not only Biblical Theology, but also Systematic Theology at the Korea Theological Seminary, Chongshin Theological Seminary, and Hap-Dong Theological Seminary, which are the representative theological seminaries in Korean Reformed theology.⁵⁴ Yet in his book of systematic theology, *Reformed Dogmatics*,⁵⁵ the epistemological oversight of the importance of Calvin's "union with Christ" is also apparent.

Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion* treats the "union with Christ" comprehensively as a central thought in multi-directional ways, more intensively in the doctrine of justification and sanctification of soteriology or in the doctrine of the Sacrament of ecclesiology; the thought recurs frequently, and its appearance is emphasized by diverse representations.⁵⁶

However, Yune-Sun Park's doctrine of the Sacrament in *Reformed Dogmatics* never refers to any primary sources of Calvin, and his "union with Christ" thought is completely absent, perhaps because Yune-Sun Park referred only to the secondary references (or sources) of Calvinistic theologians such as the following books in his doctrine of Sacrament: Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology III* (1985); A. A. Hodge, *The Confession of Faith* (London: Banner of Truth Trust, 1958); Herman Bavinck, *Gereformeerde Dogmatiek IV* (1911).⁵⁷ Yune-Sun Park's doctrine of Sacrament is a monograph of about five pages, but Calvin's "union with Christ" thought is never mentioned in it. This reveals an epistemological absence

⁵² In-Sub Ahn, "A History of Calvin Reception in Korea," 874.

⁵³ Harvie M. Conn, "Studies in the Theology of the Korean Presbyterian Church," Vol. 30, 138-9.

⁵⁴ Jae-Sung Kim, "Reformed Theology of Dr. Yune-Sun Park and the Historical Signification of Korean Theology," in *Reformed Dogmatics*, Yune-Sun Park (Seoul: Yung EumSa, 2003), Preface, 752.

⁵⁵ Ibid. Yune-Sun Park's *Reformed Dogmatics* is his posthumous work. It was published after his death by several theologians, including Jae-Sung Kim's co-operative works. Its documents were composed of some text books of his lectures and some treatises of which he postponed the publication.

⁵⁶ For more detail on the contents of this part, see this dissertation's Part 2 and Part 3.

⁵⁷ Yune-Sun Park, *Reformed Dogmatics* (Seoul: Yung Eum Sa, 2003), 429-33.

of Calvin's "union with Christ" thought.⁵⁸

Furthermore, in his '*Ordo Salutis*' (or, progress of salvation) in soteriology, he refers to Calvin's primary sources only twice⁵⁹ while the "union with Christ" thought features incidentally, only in discussion of the doctrine of justification and sanctification. On the other hand, "union with Christ," which Yune Sun Park deals with in the doctrine of sanctification is derived from Herman Bavinck, *Gereformeerde Dogmatiek IV* (1911), 268-69.⁶⁰ In other words, this central is not even emphasized in Yune-Sun Park's doctrine of justification and sanctification, but explained briefly as merely a way that can justify and sanctify.

Yune-Sun Park's conservative Calvinistic theology imposed a lasting structural limitation on Korean Reformed Theology; thus it left a negative inheritance. This is revealed in the following statement by Yune-Sun Park:

*In terms of the commentary, I am convinced that the principles of Calvinism are Biblical and I have adopted them uniformly. At those places where I have quoted the interpretations of other scholars, I have quoted principally from Calvinistic commentators. Even though there occur instances where I have quoted from the contributions of other writers, this is not to be understood as an acceptance of the totality of their theological thought but merely demonstrates agreement on questions of exegesis*⁶¹ (own emphasis).

Yune-Sun Park's completed commentaries on 66 books of the Bible are based on a Calvinistic principle, which also guided his research and the way in which he taught Systematic Theology. Yet he does not deal with "union with Christ" as a central thought, in contrasts to Calvin who dealt with "union with Christ" thought comprehensively in almost all of his biblical commentaries.⁶²

2.1.4. Others Representative Korean Reformed Theologians and Calvin's "Union with Christ" Thought

Besides Hyung-Nong Park and Yune-Sun Park, other representative theologians

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, which Yune Sun Park referred to in his soteriology are 2.2.16; 2.3.3.

⁶⁰ Yune-Sun Park, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 314-48.

⁶¹ Yune-Sun Park, *A Commentary on the Synoptic Gospels (Commentary on the New Testament)*, 7. It is extracted from Harvie M. Conn's treatise.

⁶² Yune-Sun Park, *The Biblical Theology* (Seoul: Yung Eum Sa, 2001). Regarding the relationship between Calvin's biblical commentaries and "union with Christ" thought, see Chapter 4.

who played an important role in the reception of Calvinistic theology in Korean Reformed theology are the following theologians: Chae-Choon Kim (1901-1987), also one of the first generation of Calvinistic theologians; and the second generation of Calvinistic theologians, including Kyung-Yun Chun (1916-2004), Jong-Sung Lee (1922-2011), Geun-Sam Lee (1923-2007), Chul-Ha Han (1924-), Bok-Yoon Shin (1926-), Sung-Koo Chung (1942-), and Soo-Young Lee (1946-). This fact is exposed in Sung-Koo Chung's statement:

The theologians who published the most theological treatises about Calvin or Calvinism until the present time are the following eight, Yune-Sun Park, Hyung-Nong Park, Jong-Sung Lee, Geun-Sam Lee, Sung-Koo Chung, Kyung-Yun Chun, and Chul-Ha Han. These eight theologians are mentioned in that order according to the frequency of publication in theological journals until the present time.⁶³

In In-Sub Ahn's following statement, Chae-Choon Kim's Calvinistic theological inclination and his influence are indicated clearly:

A progressive group focused on Calvin's theology of social justice. Chae-Choon Kim was the godfather of the progressive Calvin reception of Korea. He opened the possibility of addressing the social issues of Korea. His works were, in twenty volumes, published as *The Works of Changkong Kim Chae Choon* (1971). Kyung Yun Chun, along similar lines, interpreted Calvin's life and thoughts.⁶⁴

Chae-Choon Kim was affected by biblical criticism and neo-orthodox theology, and disagreed with Hyung-Nong Park and Yune-Sun Park, who pursued the conservative Calvinistic theological inclination,⁶⁵ preferring a more progressive Calvinistic theological inclination than they did.⁶⁶ His theological inclination continues exerting an importance

⁶³ S. K. Chung, *A Study on Calvinism*, 145-6.

⁶⁴ In-Sub Ahn, "Calvin in Asia," 518. About Kyung-Yun Chun, see the following treatise: Sanggyoo Lee, "Calvin Study in Korea," 276-77. In addition, the first separate volume which deals with Calvin's life and theology in Korean Reformed theology is the following Kyung-Yun Chun, *Calvin's Life and His Theological Thought* (Seoul: Han Kuck University Press, 1984.).

⁶⁵ Myung Ryong Kim, *The Theology of Karl Barth*, 318. On Cho-Sun Theological Seminary (Han Kuck Theological Seminary's former name) that was established by Chae-Choon Kim and his theological companions Dae-Hyun Kim and Chang-Geon Song in 1940 and its theological inclination, see the following book and treatises: Han Kuck University, *The 50th History of Han Kuck University* (Seoul: Han Kuck University Press, 1990); Yang Sun Kim, *History of the Korean Church in the Ten Years Since Liberation (1945-1955)* (Seoul: The Religious Education Committee of the Korean Presbyterian Church, 1956), 194 (It is quoted from Harvie M. Conn's treatise); Kang Won Yong, "The Korean Church in the World Community," in *Koreana*, Vol. 3, No. 1, Summer, 1961, 123 (It is also quoted from Harvie M. Conn's treatise).

⁶⁶ Harvie M. Conn, "Studies in the Theology of the Korean Presbyterian Church," Vol. 30, 39-49, 157-65.

influence on a theological group that has been affected by his theology.⁶⁷

Like the other first and second generation representative theologians of Korean Reformed theology, Chae-Choon Kim's theology reveals an epistemological absence of the importance of Calvin's "union with Christ" thought in the fact that Calvin's core thought is applied in a reduced manner with a limited scope. In the theological group that has been influenced by his theology, therefore, the absence of Calvin's "union with Christ" thought continues to present a theological limitation.

Jong-Sung Lee, who researched 'Calvin theology' or 'Calvinistic theology' was a second generation representative theologian in Korean Reformed theology, whose influence has been felt continually in some theological groups or the whole of Korean Reformed theology since the 1960's.⁶⁸ In the field of Calvinism he translated (1960) Hugh Thomson Kerr's *Calvin's Institutes: A New Compendium* in a context in which Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion* had not yet been translated in Korean Reformed theology, and wrote (1968) *Calvin, the Life and Thought*, which became a guide book of Calvin studies, and also translated (1973) Wilhelm Niesel's *Die Theologie Calvins*. In addition, he translated Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion* with three other joint translators in 1988. In a few words, he tried to research Calvin theology more systematically by referring more to Calvin's original sources, as well as secondary or tertiary references, than any former Calvinistic theologian.⁶⁹

The extent of Jong-Sung Lee influence on the research of Calvin's original work and the extensive reception of Calvin theology's various research references, emerges from the following sharp theological evaluation on Hyung-Nong Park:

Although Hyun-Nong Park was a Calvinist, he was not a specialist in the theology of Calvin. The treatises which he published about some of Calvin's thoughts were neither valuable nor substantial. He had relied on

⁶⁷ On Chae-Choon Kim's theology, see Chae-Choon Kim, *Chang-Gong Chae-Choon Kim's theological Opus* (Oh-San: Han Kuck University Press, 1992); Jung-Min Seo, *The History of Controversy of Korean Church* (Seoul: Ire Publishing Company, 1994); Kyung-Jae Kim, *A Critical Biography of Chae-Choon Kim: A Belief of The Incarnation and The Great Christianity* (Seoul: Sam-In Publishing Company, 2001); Kyu-Tae Son, *Chang-Gong Chae-Choon Kim's Political Theology and Thought of Ethics* (Seoul: The Christian Literature Society of Korea, 2002); Samuel Chun, *A Critical Biography of the Contemporary Theologians 2: Chae-Choon Kim* (Seoul: Sal-Lim Publishing Company, 2003); In-Soo Kim, *A Historical Materials of the Thought's History of Korean Theology* (Seoul: Presbyterian College and Theological Seminary Press, 2003).

⁶⁸ Bong-Geun Cho, "A Research about Christology of Calvin and Korean Presbyterian Church," 223-7.

⁶⁹ S. K. Chung, *A Study on Calvinism*, 146-9; Sanggyoo Lee, "Calvin Study in Korea," 277-81. On Jong-Sung Lee's other theological inclinations from the viewpoint of Calvinism, see Jong-Sung Lee, *Calvin, Life and Thought* (Seoul: The Christian Literature Society of Korea, 1978).

second-hand interpretations of previous Calvin scholars.⁷⁰ (own translation and parenthesis).

In this case, even though Jong-Sung Lee contributed a great deal to the importance of research on Calvin's original primary sources, and also pursued various references of Calvin's theology, when the whole content and structure of his theology is viewed, his work also shows a limitation of systematic research of Calvin's primary sources. Furthermore, in his *systematic theology* he accepted Calvin's theology mostly through the viewpoint of re-orthodox theology. When analyzed from the perspective of Calvin's "union with Christ" thought, we realize that he referred to Calvin's primary sources more than the other first and second generation Calvinistic theologians, but still dealt with that thought as a conditional situation in reduced range with regard to aspects of frequency, scope, and use of the various references.

In other words, Jong-Sung Lee also disregards "union with Christ," which is a central thought in the New Testament and Calvin's theology, applying it only in his doctrine of Sacrament and soteriology.⁷¹ In short, in Jong-Sung Lee's theology Calvin's "union with Christ" has been dealt with very cursorily. It is indeed ironic that he even translated Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, and Wilhelm Niesel's *Die Theologie Calvins*, but failed to discover the importance of Calvin's "union with Christ" thought. In consequence, such negligent reception and application of "union with Christ," and also ignoring its importance has continued to present a theological limitation in some theological groups that have been influenced by his theology.

On the other hand, as I mentioned before, Calvinistic theology has been systematically researched, accepted, and lauded as a remarkable theological development by the second generation's representative Korean Calvinistic theologians, and their work still exerts strong theological influences. Nevertheless, Calvin's "union with Christ" thought has been marginalized by the underestimation of its importance in their theology. Although some of these theologians show an understanding of the insufficiency they fail to deal with that thought or treat it only as a doctrine in soteriology and the doctrine of the Sacrament.⁷²

⁷⁰ Jong-Sung Lee, "Hyung-Nong Park and Korean Reformed Theology," 252.

⁷¹ Jong-Sung Lee, *Systematic Theology: Ecclesiology I* (Seoul: The Christian Literature Society, 1993), 433-50; idem, *Ethics II: Christian Ethics* (Seoul: The Christian Literature Society, 1992), 45-61.

⁷² About that part, see Kyung-Yun Chun, *Calvin's Life and His Theological Thought* (Seoul: Han Kuck University Press, 1984); Geun-Sam Lee, *Calvin, Calvinism* (Boo-San: Korea Theological Seminary Press, 1972); Geun-Sam Lee, *The Outline of Systematic Theology of Reformism I*, ed. Geun-Sam Lee's Opus Compilation committee (Seoul: The Word of Life Press, 2007); Geun-Sam Lee, *The Outline of Systematic*

Korean Reformed theologians' dissertations (from 1980 to 2005) show that they present systematic analysis or researched using primary sources related to Calvin and his theology; these include the following:

Soo-Young Lee, "La notion d'expérience chez Calvin d'après son Institution de la Religion Chrétienne" (Ph.D. Thesis, Strasbourg, 1984); Geon-Taek Park, "Doctrine de la Sainte Cène chez Calvin," Université Paris IV-Sorbonne, 1984 ("Problématique de la liberté dans l'oeuvre de Calvin," Université Paris IV-Sorbonne, 2006); Yang-Ho Lee, "The Ecclesiology Which Appeared in Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion*" (Ph.D. Thesis, Yonsei University, 1985); Jeong-Wook Hwang, "Der junge Calvin und die Psychopannychia" (Ph.D. Thesis, Wuppertal kirchliche Hochschule, 1991); Hae-Ryeong Yoo, "Bonaventura and John Calvin: The Restoration of the Image of God as a Mode of Spiritual Consummation" (Ph.D. Thesis, Fordham University, 1992); Byung-Sub Choi, "Christliches Leben nach Calvin" (Ph.D. Thesis, Evangelische Theologische Fakultät zu Münster und Leuven, 1994); Sei-Kwang Kim, "The Relevance of John Calvin's Pneumatology for the Worship of the Presbyterian Churches in Korea" (Ph.D. Thesis, Boston University, 1996); Eun-Seon Lee, "Calvin's Theological Political Ethics" (Ph.D. Thesis, Chongshin University, 1996); Yoon-Bae Choi, "De verhouding tussen pneumatologie en christologie bij Martin Bucer en Johannes Calvijn" (Ph.D. Thesis, Apeldoorn, 1996); Kyung-Lim Kang, "Calvin and Nicodemism" (Ph.D. Thesis, Chongshin University, 1997); Jeong-Sook Lee, "Excommunication and Restoration in Calvin's Geneva, 1555-1556" (Ph.D. Thesis, Princeton Theological Seminary, 1997); Jae-Sung Kim, "Unio Cum Christo: The Work of the Holy Spirit in Calvin's Theology" (Ph.D. Thesis, Westminster Theological Seminary, 1998); Sung-Hyun Park, "John Calvin on Providence: The Relation of Providence to the Secondary Cause and Man's Sin" (Ph.D. Thesis, Calvin Theological Seminary, 1998); Myung-Jun Ahn, "Brevitas et Facilitas, A study of a vital Aspect in the Theological hermeneutics of John Calvin" (Ph.D. Thesis, University of Pretoria, 1998); Jae-Hyuck Kim, "Understanding of John Calvin's Doctrine of Salvation" (Ph.D. Thesis, Bernadena University, 1999); Dae-Woo Hwang, "Het mystieke lichaam van Christus; de ecclesiologie van Martin Bucer en Johannes Calvin" (Ph.D. Thesis, Apeldoorn, 2002); Byung-Ho Moon, "Lex Dei Regula Vivendi et Vivificandi: Calvin's Christological understanding of the law in the light of His concept of Christus Mediator Legis" (Ph.D. Thesis, University of Edinburgh, 2003); In-Sub Ahn, "Augustine and Calvin about Church and State: A Comparison" (Ph.D. Thesis, Kampen Theological University, 2003); Kyung-Soo Park, "John Calvin as an Advocate of Church Unity: A New Portrait of John Calvin" (Ph.D. Thesis, Claremont Graduate

Theology of Reformism II, ed. Geun-Sam Lee's Opus Compilation committee (Seoul: The Word of Life Press, 2007); Chul-Ha Han and Bock-Yoon Shin, *Calvin's Theological Thought* (Seoul: Sung-Kwang Publishing Company, 1997); Sung-Koo Chung, *The Life and Thought of Calvinism* (Seoul: Korean Bible Society, 1978); Sung-Koo Chung, *A Study on Calvinism*.

University, 2004); Jin-Mo Cho, “Persevere in Suffering with Good Conscience: John Calvin’s View of Christian Suffering with an Emphasis on the Relationship between Divine Preservation” (Ph.D. Thesis, Westminster Theological Seminary, 2004).⁷³

Only Jae-Sung Kim’s dissertation among these theses deals with the “union with Christ” thought, but he also treated it mostly as an aspect of the doctrine of the Work of the Holy Spirit and soteriology. Even if only these titles of the third and fourth generation’s representative Korean Calvinistic theologians’ doctoral dissertations are viewed, we realize that “union with Christ,” which is a central thought of Calvin’s theology, has been pushed to the theological edges in Korean Reformed theology.

From this viewpoint, the second generation representative Korean Calvinistic theologians might be the same, because even though they might have accepted Calvin’s theology more actively, the systematic research regarding the “union with Christ” thought was almost non-existent. As a result, this theological limitation has been perpetuated as a structural limitation in Korean Reformed theology from the early periods of systematic research on Calvin theology to the present time.

2.2. The Theological Limitations of Calvin’s “Union with Christ” Thought in Korean Reformed Theology

Calvin’s “union with Christ” thought has been dealt with extensively throughout his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, as well as in his biblical commentaries, treatises, sermons, catechisms, letters, etc. by various metaphorical expressions, and its importance has frequently been emphasized. If we view the following statement by Calvin in which he emphasized a theological polemic with Osiander, it shows clearly how important Calvin considered the “union with Christ” thought:

Therefore, that joining together of Head and members, *that indwelling of Christ in our hearts—in short, that mystical union—are accorded by us the highest degree of importance*, so that Christ, having been made ours, makes us sharers with him in the gifts with which he has been endowed. We do not, therefore, contemplate him outside ourselves from afar in order that his righteousness may be imputed to us but because we put on Christ

⁷³ Sanggyoo Lee, “Calvin Study in Korea,” 282-4. This list is not comprehensive, see also Sung-Jin Han, “Augustine and Calvin: The Use of Augustine in Calvin’s Writings” (Ph.D. Thesis, Stellenbosch University, 2003).

and are engrafted into his body—in short, because he deigns to make us one with him⁷⁴ (own emphasis).

The “union with Christ” (or “union with God” or “union with the Triune God”) thought in his biblical commentaries has been dealt with in the Four Gospels, as well as almost everywhere in the Pauline Epistles and the General Epistles. Besides, it has been dealt with multi-directionally in the Old Testament in some parts of the Pentateuch, some parts of the books of Poetry, and in the many books of the Prophets. To summarize, it is a fact that Calvin’s “union with Christ” thought has been dealt with comprehensively almost everywhere in his commentaries on the Old and New Testaments.⁷⁵

Furthermore, if we analyze Calvin’s theology regarding the relationship with other doctrines, we discover that the “union with Christ” thought plays an important role as a ‘theological core principle’ or a ‘theological methodology’ which has sovereignty in his entire theology, because it occurs in Calvin’s doctrines of Creation, God, Trinity, Pneumatology, Christology (Christ’s Ontology and Work), Revelation, Scripture, Ecclesiology, Sacrament (Baptism, Communion), soteriology (‘*Ordo Salutis*’ or, progress of salvation, Predestination, Justification, Sanctification, and etc.), Eschatology, Kingdom of God (or Kingdom of Christ), ‘*Once for All*,’ ‘*Already but not yet*,’ Christian identity, and in almost all Christian doctrines and thoughts.⁷⁶

An analysis of the structure of the *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (1559) shows clearly how Calvin arranged his theology and afterwards complemented and modified it several times, very systematically, organically, methodically, biblically, theologically, and more significantly this was clearly done deliberately.⁷⁷ For this reason his *Institutes of the Christian Religion* forms a close ‘structural framework’ and a ‘relationship of mutuality’ with “union with Christ.”⁷⁸

The conclusion is that “union with Christ” is not a mere doctrine in Calvin’s

⁷⁴ *Institutes*, 3.11.10.

⁷⁵ Calvin’s “union with Christ” thought, which is thoroughly dealt with in his commentaries of the Old and New Testaments, includes the thought of “union with Trinitarian God (“union with God,” and “union with the Holy Spirit”))” abundantly. For more detail on the content, see Chapter Four and Chapter Five of this dissertation.

⁷⁶ Regarding the interconnection between “union with Christ” and other dogmatic *loci*, see Chapter Seven of this dissertation.

⁷⁷ Calvin was a theologian who pursued a systematic, rational and logical theology. See the following books: Joel R. Beeke, “Appropriating Salvation: The Spirit, Faith and Assurance, and Repentance (3.1-3, 6-10),” in *A Theological Guide to Calvin’s Institutes: Essays and Analysis (Calvin 500)*, ed. David W. Hall and Peter A. Lillback (Phillipsburg, New Jersey: P & R Publishing, 2008), 271; idem, *Living for God’s Glory: An Introduction to Calvinism* (Orlando, Florida: Reformation Trust Publishing, 2008), 37, 173.

⁷⁸ Philip Graham Ryken, “The Believer’s Union with Christ,” in *John Calvin: A Heart for Devotion, Doctrine, and Doxology*, ed. Burk Parsons (Orlando, Florida: Reformation Trust Publishing, 2008), 191.

theology, but transcends that category. In Calvin's theology it presumes an inter-relationship with almost all other doctrines and connects those reciprocal relations as the one that penetrates almost all other doctrines. Moreover, as a biblical-centric theologian,⁷⁹ it is unthinkable that Calvin would have dealt with "union with Christ" as merely a doctrine subordinated to soteriology.

Calvin's "union with Christ" deserves to be researched accurately and applied to our theology and belief more exactly as a precedential theological work and not only as mere doctrine, but as a 'theological principle,' 'theological thought,' or 'theological methodology' that is interconnected to other doctrines. Additionally the connectivity with his entire theology should be taken into account. This demands a precedential, integrated, theological, analytical work which maintains the inter-relationship or coherence with his whole oeuvre for the correct evaluation and worth of "union with Christ."

However, even though Korean Reformed theology or the Korean Reformed Church was rooted in Calvinistic theology from the beginning and has developed continually with Calvinistic theology, the "union with Christ" thought, which is a central thought of Calvin's theology, has been marginalized continually from the period of its early reception to the present. Many Korean Reformed theologians show an insufficient understanding of the phenomenon "union with Christ."

Why has the meaning, scope, frequency, and importance of Calvin's "union with Christ" thought been so reduced in Korean Reformed theology? On the other hand, even though Korean Reformed theology's contributions and achievements on Calvin theology have continually been extended, why has the "union with Christ" thought been neglected? What is the theological problem? If we examine its central causes, it could be compressed into the following few points:

2.2.1. The Research Insufficiency with regard to Primary Sources

As I mentioned, the reception and research on Calvinistic theology in Korean Reformed theology has maintained a tight interconnectedness, so that some theological treatises or books of Calvinistic theologians were accepted directly after translation in the early period. In Korean Reformed theology a period of prolific publication on Calvin's

⁷⁹ William J. Bouwsma, "The Spirituality of John Calvin," in *Christian Spirituality II: High Middle Ages and Reformation*, ed. Jill Raitt, Vol. 17 of *World Spirituality: An Encyclopedic History of the Religious Quest* (New York: Crossroad, 1987), 318. On Calvin's own emphasis on theology that is Bible-centric, see the following: *Institutes*, 1.13.21; 1.14.1; 1.14.4; 3.1.1; 4.19.9.

theology began in the 1930's,⁸⁰ although the writing on Calvin of that period was limited mostly to minor treatises which depended absolutely on Calvinistic theologians' second or third indirect resources, rather than Calvin's original primary sources and resources.

The period that prepared a theological 'framework' for systematic research of Calvin in Korean Reformed theology began only in the 1950's or 1960's. By this stage some important sources on the research of Calvin's theology or Calvinistic theology had been translated and accepted, the Korean Calvin Theology Institution was established, and some consequences of in-depth theological research such as *The commemorative collections of treatise for the 400 Anniversary of Calvin* (1965) started appearing through these institutions.⁸¹

Nevertheless, an interest in Calvin's primary sources, namely, original theological works, began only after the 1970's. Concretely, Calvin's sermons began to be translated in 1970, followed by translation of Calvin's entire books of the *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, by Moon-Jae Kim, and published by the Sae-Jong Publishing Company in 1977. Afterward, besides Moon-Jae Kim, the English version of the entire volumes of *Institutions of the Christian Religion* were translated jointly by Jong-Heob Kim, Bock-Yoon Shin, Jong-Sung Lee and Chul-Ha Han and was published by The Word of Life Press from 1986 to 1989. In 2003 it was translated by Kwang-Yeun Won, and published by the editorial department of Christian Sung-Moon Publishing Company in 1990, and published by Christian Digest Publishing Company. The Latin version of *Institutions of the Christian Religion* was translated by Young-Min Ko from 2006 to 2008.

Calvin's Old and New Commentaries were further translated and published as a total 30 volumes in 1982, and the other theological works and letters of Calvin were continually being published from the latter half of the 1980's up to the present; yet, direct systematic research on Calvin theology's primary sources in Korean Reformed theology had barely begun. In practice, Calvin research in Korean Reformed theology began to blossom after the 1980's. More than 230 doctoral dissertations about Calvin theology were published by Korean theologians after the 1980's. In addition, many other crucial theological books about Calvin and Calvinism were translated in this period. The period of remarkable development in Calvin theology therefore, coincides with the period of intensive research into Calvin's primary sources.

More practically, as the first academic explorations from inside Korea, Soo-Young

⁸⁰ Sanggyoo Lee, "Calvin Study in Korea," 272-3.

⁸¹ S. K. Chung, *A Study on Calvinism*, 144-9; Sanggyoo Lee, "Calvin Study in Korea," 275-81.

Lee researched Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion* toward acquiring a Ph.D from the Strasbourg University, France in 1984, and Yang-Ho Lee obtained a Ph.D with a dissertation related to Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion* from Yonsei University in 1985. The period of Calvin research using primary sources is thus less than 40 years. On the other hand, the periods that Calvin's entire theology, including *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*, had been systematically researched and analyzed are more recent and are still in process.⁸²

Also in the field of research the insufficiency of attention to the "union with Christ" thought remains a serious shortcoming in Korean Reformed theology, since very few volumes have been dedicated to analysis of the thought, based on Calvin's original primary sources. Also in Korean Reformed theology, most books dealing with Calvin's "union with Christ" thought (or doctrine) refer not only Calvin's primary sources, but include secondary or tertiary references. Even in Pneumatological, soteriological, and the doctrinal studies in which Calvin's "union with Christ" thought is dealt with extensively, that thought has never been explored extensively. The theologians who research the concept by using Calvin's primary sources are a very limited few, because the research material has been secondary or tertiary indirect sources of Calvinistic theologians.

More precisely, the following references are the outcome of my own analysis of the references of Calvin theology related to Calvin's "union with Christ" thought (or doctrine) in Korean Reformed theology. Even if some unpublished treatises or references were excluded, almost every case referred. The treatises and books of theologians who systematically researched Calvin's "union with Christ" but only partially, as part of the doctrine of soteriology, Pneumatology, and Sacrament using Calvin's primary sources are the following: Jae-Sung Kim, *Unio Cum Christo: The Work of the Holy Spirit in Calvin's Theology*, Westminster Theological Seminary, 1998; Jae-Sung Kim, *Divine with the Holy Spirit John Calvin* (Seoul: The Word of Life Press, 2004); Jong-Cheon Won, *John Calvin's Theology and Piety* (Seoul: The Christian Literature Society of Korea, 2010); Jong-Cheon Won, "The doctrine of Union with Christ," in *Calvin Theology and Pastorate*, ed. Korean Calvin Institution (Seoul: The Christian Literature Society of Korea, 1999), 47-82.

Although even less systematic than those theologians, other treatises on Calvin's "union with Christ" using primary sources are the following: Woong-San Kang, "The Theological Structure and its meaning of Calvin's doctrine of Justification," in *A Commemorative Academic Conference for the 500 Anniversary of Calvin: Calvin and Korean*

⁸² Sanggyoo Lee, "Calvin Study in Korea," 280-9; S. K. Chung, *A Study on Calvinism*, 149-51.

Church(1), ed. Myung-Jun Ahn (Seoul: SFC Publication, 2011), 39-80; Eun-Soo Kim, “Soteriology’s the Center and Essence of Calvin: Unio cum Christo and ‘Duplex Gratia,’” in *A Commemorative Academic Conference for the 500 Anniversary of Calvin: Calvin and Korean Church(1)*, ed. Myung-Jun Ahn (Seoul: SFC Publication, 2011), 14-38; Hwan-Bong Lee, “Calvin’s the doctrine of Sanctification: Christ’s in Sacrament,” in *Reformism Theology and Belief series, volume 1: Calvin and Church*, ed. Korea Theological Seminary Reformism Academy (Boo-San: Korea Theological Seminary Press, 2007), 109-45.

Other treatises, which referred very limitedly to Calvin’s “union with Christ” with reference to primary sources, are the following: Ho-Deok Kwon, “Calvin’s Pantheistic Opponent, Andreas Osiander,” 277-96; Myung-Seon Moon, “Holy Spirit’s Work which guide to the communion with Christ,” in *Calvin Researches*, Vol. 7, ed. Korean Calvin Institution (Seoul: Korean Presbyterian Publishing Company, 2010). Moreover, because other treatises and theological books that dealt partially with Calvin’s “union with Christ” in soteriology, Pneumatology, and the doctrine of Sacrament by referring to Calvin’s original sources existed in Korean Reformed Theology, I omit them on account of limited space. Considering the above result of the analysis, the researchers’ not referring to original primary sources on Calvin’s “union with Christ” have brought about an epistemologically deficit with regard to this thought.

Calvin’s own emphasis on the importance of “union with Christ” thought is clear from the following statement from *The Institutes*:

Let us sum these up. *Christ was given to us* by God’s generosity, *to be grasped and possessed by us* in faith: namely, that being reconciled to God through Christ’s blamelessness, *we may have in heaven* instead of a Judge a gracious Father; and secondly, that sanctified by Christ’s spirit we may cultivate blamelessness and purity of life... Therefore we must now discuss these matters thoroughly. And we must so discuss them as to bear in mind that *this (“union with Christ” thought) is the main hinge on which religion turns, so that we devote the greater attention and care to it*⁸³ (own emphasis and parenthesis).

We realize that one of the crucial causes of the limited understanding of Calvin’s “union with Christ” thought is the insufficient research on his primary sources that are related to it. The best way to overcome the epistemological limitations will be to write a theological work that analyzes and systemically researches Calvin’s original primary sources where they

⁸³ *Institutes*, 3.11.1.

relate to the thought.

2.2.2. “Union with Christ” was Approached only as a Doctrine

Why was the “union with Christ” thought ironically pushed to the theological edges in Korean Reformed theology, which otherwise strongly accepted Calvinistic theology from the early periods? It was not only the dependence on secondary or tertiary references on that thought, but also that research on Calvin’s primary sources were relatively insufficient.

This cause, that is closely inter-related with the “union with Christ” thought, has been dealt with only as the ‘approach of a doctrinal aspect.’ In fact the “union with Christ” thought transcends ‘a doctrine’ that is subordinated to one or two others in Calvin’s theology. If “union with Christ,” which is also a central thought of the New Testament and Calvin’s theology, is approached only doctrinally, the correct meaning and the vast importance of that thought is missed.

As mentioned, Calvin’s “union with Christ” thought has been dealt with thoroughly as a doctrine since the early periods of Pyeong Yang Seminary. As a result, its scope and importance have been reduced. In the same manner, the first and the second generation representative theologians, who had a strong theological influence on Korean Reformed theology, perpetuated the reduction of the thought to a simple doctrine in soteriology and the doctrine of Sacrament. In consequence, this reception has affected its understanding until the present, and built it into Korean Reformed theology only as a doctrine.

Of course, the reason that these theologians accepted and dealt with the thought in this way resulted from its inter-relationship with the developmental tendency of international Calvin research. In theological Calvin research, attempts to present analytical and integrated research appeared only toward the end of 1920. The following emphasis of Gustav Krüger proves this fact:

We do not yet (until in 1929) seem to have found the basis for any systematic exposition, and in view of Calvin’s method and type of thought all such attempts would encounter special difficulties⁸⁴ (own parenthesis).

Until the 1930s Calvin’s theological essence had been introduced by theologians such as Hermann Bauke, to interpret Calvin’s theology with an integrated (or overall)

⁸⁴ Gustav Krüger, *Die evangelische Theologie. Ihr jetziger Stand und Ihr Aufgaben*. 3. Teil: Die Kirchengeschichte, II, I, Halle, 1929, 27. It is quoted from Niesel’s book.

viewpoint. Bauke arranged the theological research of those periods about Calvin and admits that some theological understanding is to be found in Calvin's doctrines:

Form (the theological form of Calvin's theology) not of course in the sense of its outward vesture, style, classification, and arrangement, etc., but in the deeper more comprehensive sense of the inner development and structure of the whole theological contents⁸⁵ (own parenthesis).

However, Bauke's research (1922) did not deal directly with the comprehensive aspect of Calvin's theology, which received attention only from the 1930's. In this period, some practical research was attempted to discover Calvin's theological principle, form, theme, and content from this point of view.

In detail, if seen chronologically, the representative books that interpreted Calvin's theology as comprehensive, or integrated viewpoints are the following: Hermann Weber, *Die Theologie Calvins, Ihre innere Systematik im Lichte strukturpsychologischer Forschungsmethode* (Berlin: Elsner, 1930) (Monographien zur Grundlegung der philosophischen Anthropologie und Wirklichkeitsphilosophie. Von E. Jaensch, Bd. IV); Egbert Emmen, *Christologie van Calvijn* (Amsterdam: H. J. Paris, 1935); Wilhelm Niesel, *Die Theologie Calvins*, Chr. Kaiser Verlag, Munich, 1938; W. Kolffhaus, *Christusgemeinschaft bei Johannes Calvin* (Buchhandlung des Erziehungsvereins Neukirchen Kr. Moers, 1939); T. F. Torrance, *Calvin's Doctrine of Man* (London: Lutterworth, 1949); François Wendel, *Calvin, Sources et évolution de sa pensée religieuse* (Presse Universitaires de France, 1950); E. A. Dowey, *The Knowledge of God in Calvin's Theology* (New York, 1952); Ronald S. Wallace, *Calvin's Doctrine of the Word and Sacrament* (Oliver and Boyd, 1953); John Frederick Jansen, *Calvin's doctrine of the work of Christ* (California: J. Clark, 1956); T. H. L. Parker, *Calvin's Doctrine of the Knowledge of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959); Werner Krusche, *Das Wirken des Heiligen Geistes nach Calvin* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1957); E. David Willis, *Calvin's Catholic Christology* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1966).

Even if it strikes us as late, such theological writings began to be translated after the 1970's.⁸⁶ The research treatises of Korean theologians who majored in Calvin theology vigorously begun to be published from the middle of the 1980's, triggering popularity for comprehensive, integrated research of Calvin theology. Thus there were attempts to approach

⁸⁵ Hermann Bauke, *Die Probleme der Theologie Calvins*, 1922, 12. It is re-quoted from Niesel's book.

⁸⁶ Sanggyoo Lee, "Calvin Study in Korea," 279; S. K. Chung, *A Study on Calvinism*, 149.

the “union with Christ” thought as a doctrinal aspect in Korean Reformed theology from at least the 1970’s.

The environments of Korean Reformed theology changed between the 1970’s and the middle of the 1980’s. Doctoral dissertations about Calvin theology were published briskly by Korean Reformed theologians, more than anywhere in the world of Calvinistic academic society. Nevertheless, it is my contention that they have never overcome the theological limitation of Calvin’s “union with Christ” beyond a mere doctrine.

In detail, according to my own analysis, the treatises and the books in which Calvin’s “union with Christ” has been dealt with partially as a doctrine in soteriology and the doctrine of Sacrament by Korean Reformed theologians are the following: Bock-Yoon Shin, *Calvin’s Theological Thought* (Seoul: Sung-Kwang Publishing Company, 1997); Jong-Cheon Won, *John Calvin’s Theology and Piety*; Hong-Yuel Jeong, “The Feature of Calvin’s Christology and Soteriology,” 255-74.

On the other hand, the treatises and books in which Calvin’s “union with Christ” has been dealt with only partially as a doctrine in soteriology (or the doctrine of Justification and Sanctification) by Korean Reformed theologians are the following: Woong-San Kang, “The Theological Structure and its meaning of Calvin’s doctrine of Justification,” in *A Commemorative Academic Conference for the 500 Anniversary of Calvin: Calvin and Korean Church(1)*, ed. Myung-Jun Ahn (Seoul: SFC Publication, 2011), 39-80; Ho-Deok Kwon, “Calvin’s Pantheistic Opponent, Andreas Osiander,” 277-96; Eun-Soo Kim, “Soteriology’s Center and Essence of Calvin: Unio cum Christo and ‘Duplex Gratia,’” in *A Commemorative Academic Conference for the 500 Anniversary of Calvin: Calvin and Korean Church (1)*, ed. Myung-Jun Ahn (Seoul: SFC Publication, 2011), 14-38; Jong-Cheon Won, “The doctrine of Union with Christ,” 47-82; Kwang-Woong Yoo, “The Doctrine of Sanctification,” in *Calvin Theology and Pastorate*, ed. Korean Calvin Institution (Seoul: The Christian Literature Society of Korea, 1999), 83-114; Chang-Hyung Ryu, *De Sanctificatione Joannis Calvini* (Young-In: Mock-Yang Publishing Company, 2009).

Also, the treatises and books in which Calvin’s “union with Christ” has been dealt with partially only as a doctrine in Ecclesiology (and the sacraments) by Korean Reformed theologians are the following: Kyung-Soo Park, “Calvin’s Endeavor for Church Unity Which Appeared in the Doctrine of Sacrament: by Center of Treatise (1541) and Zurich Consensus Statement (1549) about Sacrament,” in *Calvin Researches*, Vol. 3, ed. Korean Calvin Institution (Seoul: Korean Presbyterian Publishing Company, 2005), 207-28; Oh-Kab Lee, “The Doctrine of Ecclesiology,” in *Calvin Theology and Pastorate*, ed. Korean Calvin

Institution (Seoul: The Christian Literature Society of Korea, 1999), 231-52; Hwan-Bong Lee, “Calvin’s doctrine of Sanctification: Christ’s in Sacrament,” 109-45; Yoon-Bae Choi, “The Essence of Church Which Appeared in Calvin’s *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (1959),” in *Calvin Researches*, Vol. 3, ed. Korean Calvin Institution (Seoul: Korean Presbyterian Publishing Company, 2005), 123-45; Dae-Woo Hwang, “Het mystieke lichaam van Christus; de ecclesiologie van Martin Bucer en Johannes Calvin,” in *Calvin Researches*, Vol. 3, ed. Korean Calvin Institution (Seoul: Korean Presbyterian Publishing Company, 2005), 147-205.

Finally, the treatises and the books in which Calvin’s “union with Christ” has been dealt with only partially as a doctrine in Pneumatology by Korean Reformed theologians are the following: Jae-Sung Kim, “Unio Cum Christo: The Work of the Holy Spirit in Calvin’s Theology,” Jae-Sung Kim, *Divine with the Holy Spirit John Calvin*; Myung-Seon Moon, “Holy Spirit’s Work which guide to the communion with Christ,” 8-27.

The analysis shows, regrettably, that in Korean Reformed theology, many theologians have never dealt with, “union with Christ” even as a doctrine, despite its position as a central thought in Calvin’s theology. To summarize, we realize that the theological atmosphere in which Calvin’s “union with Christ” thought has been approached only as a doctrinal aspect derives from the interconnectedness with the developmental tendency of international Calvin theology research. One of the main causes then, in my view, is the structural theological limitation that deals with that thought mono-dimensionally only as a doctrinal aspect.

2.2.3. A High Degree of Dependence on the American Calvinistic Theology

In the strict meaning of the word, the practical root of Korean Reformed theology is the American conservative Calvinistic theology because Korean Reformed theology evolved from conservative Calvinistic theology since its beginning, and had developed with continual acceptance of the strong theological influences of American Calvinistic theologians (missionaries) of the conservative Pyeong Yang Seminary, which those theologians had established. In other word, Korean Reformed Theology was formed by a theological framework in close proximity to conservative American Calvinist theology.⁸⁷ Jae-Sung Kim

⁸⁷ Yo-Na Kim, *The History of Ninety Years of Chongshin* (Seoul: Yang-Moon Publishing Company, 1991), 128-9; The 100 Anniversary of Compilatory Committee of Chongshin University, *The History of One Hundred Years of Chongshin University*, Vol. 1 (Seoul: Chongshin University Press, 2003), 232-6.

confirms this:

Dr. Samuel A. Moffett was the first president of Pyeong Yang Theological Seminary and left a great impact on the establishment of Korean Christian leadership. One of the crucial aspects for the growth of the Seminary was the conviction of Dr. Moffett who spent all his energy for evangelism and the formation of reformed theology in Korea... In addition to Dr. Moffett, all of the professors were McCormick Theological Seminary alumni members such as Graham Lee, William Baird, William L. Swallen, C. F. Bernheisel, Charles A. Clark with the exception of William Hunt who came from Princeton Theological Seminary. Pyeong Yang Seminary was closely associated with the Old School tradition in America... McCormick Theological Seminary and Princeton Theological Seminary adhered to traditional doctrine and polity without compromising to the modification of Calvinism. Princeton Seminary committed to the leadership of Archibald Alexander, Charles Hodge, B. B. Warfield, to J. Gresham Machen. Between 1822 and 1877, Charles Hodge trained more than two thousand students. Hodge's *Systematic Theology* was considered as the backbone of scholarly Calvinism. Most missionaries in Korea came from these two reformed seminaries.⁸⁸

We see that Korean Reformed theology continued from a foundation laid by conservative American Calvinists such as Charles W. Hodge, A. A. Hodge, Augustus Hopkins Strong, Louis Berkhof and B. B. Warfield. Among these theologians only A. H. Strong had written the systematic theological book as a separate volume related to “union with Christ,” but he did not systematically accept Calvin's “union with Christ” thought. Even though the early Korean Reformed theology had partly accepted Strong's systematic theology, his “union with Christ” doctrine was not accepted.⁸⁹

In short, the professors (or lecturers) of systematic theology of the early Pyeong Yang Seminary had been similarly influenced theologically by the conservative American Calvinists, and most used their *Systematic Theology* as a textbook, translated but without any editing. Otherwise, they lectured from *Systematic Theology*, edited on the basis of those theological books.⁹⁰

In fact, the early Pyeong Yang Seminary had been influenced both by the

⁸⁸ Jaesung Kim, “Reformed Theology in Korea: Its Origin and Transplantations,” in *International Congress of Reformed and Presbyterian Churches' academic conference: Revival and Unity of Reformed Churches*, ed. The Preparation Committee of ICRRefC (Seoul: Chongshin University, 2013), 215-217.

⁸⁹ Regarding Strong's “union with Christ,” see Augustus Hopkins Strong, *Union with Christ: A Chapter of Systematic Theology* (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1913).

⁹⁰ Jae-Buhm Hwang, “Korean Theologians' Ambivalent Responses to Calvinism,” *Neue Zeitschrift für systematische Theologie und Religionsphilosophie*, Vol. 53, No. 4 (2011): 480-495; Harvie M. Conn, “Studies in the Theology of the Korean Presbyterian Church,” Vol. 29, 44-5.

missionaries who graduated from McCormick Seminary and the curriculum of McCormick Seminary.⁹¹ Therefore, it was also called the “McCormick Seminary of Korea.”⁹² If we view the following similarities of curriculum between McCormick Seminary (1888) and Pyeong Yang Seminary (1920), this fact is affirmed:

		McCormick (1888)	Pyeong Yang (1922)
Systematic Theology	1 st Year	Apologetics, Evidences, Doctrine of God, Inspiration	Theology, Catechism, Evidences
	2 nd Year	Apologetics, Evidences, Creation, Angels, Human, Sin, Christ, The Holy Spirit	Anthropology, Soteriology
	3 rd Year	Apologetics, Evidences, Law, Liberty of Christians, Grace, Prayer, Sabbath, Eschatology	Eschatology, The Holy Spirit
Biblical Theology	1 st Year	O.T. and Exposition N.T. and Exposition	O.T. and Exposition History of O. T. N.T. and Exposition N.T. Survey Biblical
	2 nd Year	O.T. and Exposition N.T. and Exposition	O.T. and Exposition N.T. and Exposition O. T. Geography
	3 rd Year	O.T. and Exposition N.T. and Exposition	O.T. and Exposition N.T. and Exposition
Historical Theology	1 st Year	Church History (The Age of the Apostles - A.D590)	The Age of the Apostles - Nicea (325 A.D.)
	2 nd Year	A.D590 - A.D1648	History of after Nicea (325 A.D.) - before the Reformation
	3 rd Year	A.D1648 - Modern times	History of the Reformation - History of after the Reformation

The similarities between McCormick and Pyeong Yang Seminary.⁹³

Although I omitted it on account of limited space, those two Seminaries' curricula are much more similar in subjects such as biblical theology, ecclesiology, and practical

⁹¹ Charles Allen Clark, Letter to Mr. McCaughey, April 15, 1939, in Robert Culver McCaughey, “A Survey of the Literary Output of McCormick Alumni in Chosen,” 91.

⁹² Yong-Kyu Park, *Korean Protestantism and Biblical Authority: A History of Presbyterian Theological Thought in Korea* (Seoul: Chongshin Publishing Company, 1992), 74.

⁹³ Kyung-Hyun Cho, *The Theological Roots of the North Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. in the Early Korean Church* (Seoul: The Institute of Church History of Korea, 2005), 20-1.

theology (pastoral theology, homiletics) than systematic theology.⁹⁴ If, however, we compare the chart above, McCormick Seminary seems to have more subjects than in Pyeong Yang Seminary's curriculum of systematic theology. Especially in the case of Pneumatology and Soteriology making use of systematic theology textbooks and curricula of Pyeong Yang Seminary and McCormick Seminary,⁹⁵ it becomes clear that Calvin's "union with Christ" thought rarely featured. Kwang-Yeol Kim's following statement, which is related to John C. Crane who was a professor of Pyeong Yang Seminary, testifies to this:

Against those distorted gospels, the author (John C. Crane) argues, Calvinism holds the view that the change of human hearts must occurred first, and the followed by those experiences of repentance and faith as well as other spiritual blessings such as justification, adoption, sanctification, and glorification. Only this position can present consistently, the author argues, the "doctrine of redemption by Grace alone," for only this view can show that our salvation is to be supported and accomplished by His Grace alone from the very beginning to the last stage of salvation. The author's critique on the thoughts of Arminianism is not limited in the section of "plan of salvation," but can be found throughout all over the materials of his book (John C. Crane's Systematic Theology). Even against Arminian's doctrines. After he wrote about calling and regeneration, and before entering into the subject of conversion, he inserted about 20 pages as chapter 4 and introduce Arminian doctrines and evaluated them⁹⁶ (own parenthesis).

The one doctrine in which Calvin's "union with Christ" thought receives stronger emphasis in his *Institutions of the Christian Religion* is soteriology. But, in *Systematic Theology, Vol. 5: Soteriology* of John C. Crane, professor of Systematic Theology in Pyeong Yang Seminary, reveals that "union with Christ" had never been emphasized, leading to an epistemological absence of that thought. When he deals with 'the order of Salvation,' even though he had mentioned regeneration, conversion, faith, justification, adoption, sanctification, and glorification, he remains silent on "union with Christ."⁹⁷

This means that the kernel of Calvin's theology has been subordinated to the

⁹⁴ For more detail the comparison of the curriculum between McCormick Seminary (1888) and Pyeong Yang Seminary (1920), see Kyung-Hyun Cho, *Initial Korea Presbyterian Theology: Pyeong Yang Presbyterian Theological Seminary Faculty around* (Seoul: Grisim, 2011).

⁹⁵ *Board of Directors of the Presbyterian Theological Seminary of Chosen* (1920), 4-9; Harry A. Rhodes, "Presbyterian Theological Seminary," *KMF* (June 1, 1910), 150-1; *The Minutes of the Tenth Annual Meeting of the Council of Mission in Korea* (Seoul, September, 1902), 21-4. It is quoted from Kyung-Hyun Cho's book, p. 18-22.

⁹⁶ Kwangyeol Kim, "A Discussion on the Doctrine of Sanctification in the 'Chong-Shin' Tradition," 548.

⁹⁷ John C. Crane, *Systematic Theology* 2, 336-40. It is quoted from Kwangyeol Kim's treatise.

doctrine of Justification or Sanctification since the formation of early Korean Reformed theology; otherwise it has simply been dismissed and not as an accepted condition in the doctrine of soteriology. The close connection between the scant treatment of “union with Christ” in Korean Reformed theology and the conservative American Calvinistic theology can be explained by the fact that Korean Reformed theology did not filter the initial input from American missionaries. The “union with Christ” thought receives even less attention in Korean Reformed theology than in American Calvinistic theology.

The overwhelming influence of American Calvinistic theology was continued by the first generation of Korean Reformed theologians. This fact is clear in *Dogmatic Theology, Vol. 5: Soteriology* of Hyung-Nong Park, who played a role in shaping Korean Reformed theology. If we view the comparison chart of Chun-Suk Yoon, this fact is clarified further. Some theologians to whom Hyung-Nong Park referred more than ten times in his soteriology, and their theological books are introduced in this chart:

Author	Book Titles	Number of Reference
John Calvin	Institutes (19 times), the others (7 times)	26 times
A. A. Hodge	Outlines of Theology (20 times), the others (4 times)	24 times
C. Hodge	Systematic Theology, (26 times)	26 times
A. H. Strong	Systematic Theology (13 times), the others (5 times)	18 times
H. Bavinck	Gereformeerde Dogmatiek (7 times), Our Reasonable Faith (5 times), the others (3 times)	15 times
John Murray	Redemption Accomplished and Applied (12 times)	12 times
L. Berkhof	Systematic Theology (10 times)	10 times
A. Kuyper	E. Voto (4 times), The Work of The Holy Spirit (4 times), the others (4 times)	12 times

The statistics of theological books that Hyung-Nong Park referred.⁹⁸

This chart shows that Hyung-Nong Park’s soteriology has been very strongly affected by American Calvinism. The theological books that he referred to are all the works of conservative American Calvinistic theologians, with the exception of Herman Bavinck and Abraham Kuyper, who were Dutch Reformed theologians. The frequency of references also shows differences; the scope of Calvin’s “union with Christ” thought, nevertheless, has been dealt with much less in Hyung-Nong Park’s theology.

⁹⁸ Chun-Suk Yoon, “An Evaluation about Dr. Hyung-Nong Park,” 496.

In comparison to American Calvinistic theology, “union with Christ” is allocated a marginal place. Theological differences between Hyung-Nong Park’s ‘*Ordo Salutis*’ and American Calvinistic theologians are revealed in the following chart:⁹⁹

Theologians	‘ <i>Ordo Salutis</i> ’ (or ‘the order of Salvation’)
C. Hodge	Regeneration(or Rebirth)→ Calling(Or Vocation)→ Faith→ Justification→ Sanctification
A. A. Hodge	Calling→ Regeneration→ Faith→ Union with Christ → Conversion→ Justification→ Adoption→ Sanctification→ Perseverance of the saints
L. Berkhof	Union with Christ → ExternalCalling→ Regeneration & Effective Calling→ Conversion→ Faith→ Justification→ Sanctification→ Perseverance of the saints
A. H. Strong	Election→ Calling→ Union with Christ → Regeneration→ Conversion→ Justification→ Sanctification→ Perseverance of the saints (Union with Christ)
John Murray	Calling→ Regeneration→ Faith & Repentance→ Justification→ Adoption→ Sanctification→ Perseverance of the saints→ Union with Christ → Glorification
Hyung-Nong Park	Calling→ Regeneration→ Faith & Repentance→ Justification→ Adoption→ Sanctification→ Perseverance of the saints→ Glorification

The order of Salvation (my own analysis)

Hyung-Nong Park defined justification and sanctification by referring directly to *Systematic Theology* of A. A. Hodge and Louis Berkhof,¹⁰⁰ which shows how much his soteriology relied on American Calvinistic theology. Nevertheless, Calvin’s “union with Christ” is viewed as of even lesser importance than in American Calvinistic theology. In the chart above, even A. A. Hodge and Louis Berkhof had dealt with “union with Christ,” but Hyung-Nong Park had omitted it. Of course, when Hyung-Nong Park dealt with ‘the order of Salvation,’ he was following John Murray’s theology. Although John Murray had also accepted “union with Christ,” Hyung-Nong Park omitted to do so despite having accepted the influence from American Calvinistic theology at that time.

To summarize, Korean Reformed theology had established the theological framework under the absolute influence of American Calvinistic theology of American

⁹⁹ Moon-Ho Ha, *The Basic Dogmatic Theology: Soteriology*, vol. 5 (Seoul: Korea Logos Institute, 1983), 159-60; Yoon-Bae Choi, “A Soteriology of Jook-San Hyung-Nong Park: in Central of Justification and Sanctification,” in *The Institute of Korean Reformed Theology Opus, Vol. 21: Re-illumination for Hyung-Nong Park’s Reformed Belief*, ed. The Institute of Korean Reformed Theology (Seoul: Fire and Cloud Publishing Company, 2007). On the other comparison of ‘the order of Salvation,’ see the following book: Bruce Demarest, *The Cross and Salvation: The Doctrine of Salvation* (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway Books, 2006), 53-8.

¹⁰⁰ Hyung-Nong Park, *Soteriology: Systematic Theology*, Vol. 5, 274-347.

missionaries from its founding period. Such theological influence should have had a close interconnectedness with the reception of Calvin's "union with Christ." As a consequence, the strong dependence of American Calvinistic theology about Calvin's "union with Christ" thought, was continued into Korean Reformed theology.

As I have mentioned, the current Korean Reformed theology is proceeding more actively with the systematic research of Calvin theology than anywhere else in the world. Nevertheless, because of the influence of structural theological limitations, the "union with Christ" idea has been eclipsed regarding its scope, frequency, importance, and application in Korean Reformed theology until the present time. I hope, therefore, that a re-examination of Calvin's "union with Christ" thought, followed by its re-application to our theology and belief, will spur a possible resurgence in this regard in Korean Reformed theology.

CHAPTER THREE

American Reformed Theology and Calvin's "Union with Christ" Thought

A clearer understanding of the theological limitations of the "union with Christ (*unio cum Christo*)" thought as it features in Korean Reformed theology demands an analysis of American Calvinistic theology, even if only briefly. The conservative tendency in American Calvinistic theology had influenced Korean Reformed theology strongly since its formative years. This means that there is a very close relationship between the developmental process of American Calvinistic theology and the reception of Calvinist theology in Korean Reformed theology.

The theological limitations in the Korean Reformed tradition regarding Calvin's "union with Christ" thought are a result of the reception of Calvinistic theology and its developmental process in the U.S.A., since there this core thought of the New Testament and of Calvinist theology was under-estimated and interpreted in a reduced version from what had been intended originally. As a consequence, there are gaps between American Calvinistic theology and Calvin's own theology.

Recently however Richard A. Muller has suggested another approach to address these theological gaps. He also re-evaluated this fact in the following statement:

When the issues are framed by a broad, confessional definition of the Reformed tradition, with Calvin as one of its major early codifiers, an entirely different picture emerges — one which, moreover, is far more respectful of the historical materials. There are, certainly, differences in nuance and detail between the theology of Calvin and the theologies of later Calvinistic or Reformed thinkers, but there are equivalent differences in nuance and detail both between the teachings of Calvin and the views of his contemporaries and among various later Reformed writers.¹

While there was agreement that some theological gaps existed between Calvinistic

¹ Richard A. Muller, "John Calvin and later Calvinism: the identity of the Reformed tradition," in *The Cambridge Companion to Reformation Theology*, ed. David Bagchi and David C. Steinmetz (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 148.

theology and Calvin's own theology,² those theologians presented conflicting evaluations against using another approach. Carl R. Trueman's insistence in the following statement demonstrates this fact:

The rise in recent years of a more historically sensitive and less dogmatically driven approach to Calvin's thought, which emphasizes the broader diachronic and synchronic contexts of his thought, and those of subsequent theologians, has done much to expose both the methodological problems inherent in the "Calvin against the Calvinists" school, and also served to relativize Calvin's contribution to the Reformed faith. Calvin now emerges not so much as the culmination of a pristine tradition that is perverted by his successors and more as the theological *primus inter pares* of his generation of Reformed theologians whose work stimulated many of the later developments in Reformed Orthodoxy.³

Maybe it is most responsible to affirm both the continuity and the discontinuity between Calvin and the later Calvinists. Nevertheless, Calvin's theology had an absolute influence on the formation of Calvinistic theology, and on the developmental process of Reformed Orthodoxy. Yet if we are unable to understand, analyze, and correctly later interpretations of Calvin's own theology, his theological, biblical, religious and doctrinal thought will be misunderstood, or will never be dealt with in Reformed theology. A decisive example is Calvin's "union with Christ" thought.

Calvin's "union with Christ" thought is central to his entire theology, recurring in various expressions, for instance in his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, biblical commentaries, treatises, sermons, catechisms, and letters. Nevertheless, Calvin's "union with Christ" thought has been dealt with mostly as only a doctrine subordinated to soteriology and the doctrine of Sacrament in Reformed theology, especially in American Calvinistic theology.

On the other hand, the other serious theological gap is the difference of understanding of "union with Christ" between the theology of Calvin and the theologies of

² See Ernst Bizer, *Theologische Studien: Eine Schriftenreihe herausgeben von Karl Barth und Max Geiger (Frühorthodoxie und Rationalismus)* (Zürich: Evz-Verlag, 1963); Basil Hall, "Calvin against the Calvinists," in *Proceedings of the Huguenot Society of London*, Vol. 20, ed. Huguenot Society of London (London: Huguenot Society of London, 1962), 284-301; Carl R. Trueman, "Calvin and Reformed Orthodoxy," in *The Calvin Handbook*, ed. Herman J. Selderhuis, trans. Judith J. Guder, Henry J. Baron, Randi H. Lundell, and Gerrit W. Sheeres (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 472. See also Richard A. Muller, "John Calvin and later Calvinism: The identity of the Reformed tradition," 130-149; James E. Bradley and Richard A. Muller, *Church History: An Introduction to Research, Reference Works, and Methods* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009); Richard A. Muller, *The Study of Theology: From Biblical Interpretation to Contemporary Formulation*, vol. 7, Foundations of Contemporary Interpretation (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zonderban Publishing House, 1991).

³ Carl R. Trueman, "Calvin and Reformed Orthodoxy," 479.

later Calvinistic or Reformed thinkers. In fact, this difference of understanding of “union with Christ” became another decisive cause which widened the theological gaps between Calvin and the later Calvinistic theology.

It is necessary to compare Calvin’s theology and recent (Calvinist) Reformed theology, a research project which compares and analyzes a comprehensive view of Calvin’s primary sources should be conducted continually. In the following two parts, on account of limited space, I will examine only the theological limitations in American Reformed theology that influenced Korean Reformed theology directly regarding the understanding of Calvin’s “union with Christ” thought.

In this part, I will briefly examine the representative theologians who played a role in the reception process of Calvinistic theology in the U.S.A. and their theological tendencies regarding the “union with Christ” thought. In the next part, I will deal in greater detail with the theological limitations that have existed in American Calvinistic theology about the “union with Christ” thought. Subsequently, I will analyze Calvin’s own “union with Christ” thought intensively in Parts Two and Three.

3.1. The Reception of Calvin’s Theology in the U.S.A. and Calvin’s “Union with Christ” Thought

3.1.1. The First Generation of American Calvinistic Theologians and Calvin’s “Union with Christ” Thought

The American continent was first “discovered” 25 years before Martin Luther initiated the Reformation. Thereafter some European Christian groups crossed over to America to seek religious freedom when religious persecution escalated. The early settlements in America started from the mid sixteenth century and continued to the mid-seventeenth century.⁴ Calvinistic theology had been accepted in America by that time.⁵

Those groups that had played a decisive role in the reception of Calvinistic

⁴ See Scott M. Manetsch, “Calvin in America,” in *The Calvin Handbook*, ed. Herman J. Selderhuis, trans. Judith J. Guder, Henry J. Baron, Randi H. Lundell, and Gerrit W. Sheeres (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 519-526.

⁵ On the relationship between American Reformed theology and Calvinistic theology, see the following: George M. Marsden, “Introduction: Reformed and American,” in *The Princeton Theology: Reformed Theology in America*, ed. David F. Wells (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House Company, 1989), 1-12; I. John Hesselink, *On Being Reformed: Distinctive Characteristics and Common Misunderstanding* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: Servant Books, 1983).

theology in the New Continent of America can be divided into five groups: English Puritans; Dutch Reformed; French Huguenots; German Reformed; and Scottish and Irish Presbyterians,⁶ of which at least two thirds were Calvinists.⁷ Hence American Reformed theology had been created with a strong theological influence of Calvinism from the beginning. Scott M. Manetsch's following explanation testifies to this fact:

The legacy of John Calvin has left a deep imprint on American religion and culture. Of the immigrants who braved the Atlantic crossing in search of religious freedom and commercial prosperity in the seventeenth century, a sizeable number were Reformed Protestants... This Reformed theological tradition owed much to Calvin, but also to other sixteenth-century reformers like Ulrich Zwingli, Heinrich Bullinger, Martin Bucer, and John Knox. Although the term *Calvinism* is an inexact shorthand for this broader religious tradition (*the theology of all 16th Century Reformers*), its use is not entirely inappropriate in the American context given Calvin's pervasive influence⁸ (own parenthesis).

One theologian who had a crucial influence on the foundation of Calvinism in the U.S.A. is Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758).⁹ According to Perry Miller, he was "the first consistent and authentic Calvinist in New England."¹⁰ 'New Divinity,' which was pursued as an evangelistic and also a revivalist Calvinistic theological tendency, was quickened by his influence.¹¹ Thereafter, the representative theologians of 'New Divinity' were Samuel Hopkins (1721-1803) and Timothy Dwight (1751-1817). Under their influence Andover Newton Theological Seminary was established in 1808, as the first theological postgraduate seminary of Protestants in the U.S.A. against the Unitarianism¹² of Harvard University.¹³

⁶ John T. McNeill, *The History and Character of Calvinism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1954), 331-50.

⁷ S. K. Chung, *A Study on Calvinism* (Seoul: Chongshin Publishing Company, 2003), 115-6; Morton Howison Smith, *Studies in Southern Presbyterian Theology* (Drukkerij en Uitgeverij Jacob Van Campen: Amsterdam, 1962), 13-20.

⁸ Scott M. Manetsch, "Calvin in America," 519.

⁹ John McNeill, *The History and Character of Calvinism* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1950), 360. Regarding the theological thought of Edwards, see the followings: John H. Gerstner, *Steps to Salvation: The Evangelistic Message of Jonathan Edwards* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1960), 14; Perry Miller, *Jonathan Edwards* (New York: William Sloane, 1949), 305; Michael D. Bush, "Calvin's Reception in the Eighteenth Century," in *The Calvin Handbook*, ed. Herman J. Selderhuis, trans. Judith J. Guder, Henry J. Baron, Randi H. Lundell, and Gerrit W. Sheeres (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 482.

¹⁰ Perry Miller, "The Marrow of Puritan Divinity," in *Errand into the Wilderness* (Cambridge: Belknap, 1956), 98.

¹¹ Mark A. Noll, "Jonathan Edwards and Nineteenth-Century Theology," in *Jonathan Edwards and the American Experience*, ed. Nathan O. Hatch and Harry S. Stout (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 260-87; Joseph Conforti, "Antebellum Evangelicals and the Cultural Revival of Jonathan Edwards," *American Presbyterians* 64 (1986): 227-41. It is quoted from William B. Evans' book.

¹² The past Unitarians rejected the divine nature of the Son and the Holy Spirit, emphasizing strongly

Even though the “union with Christ” thought in Calvin’s theology is handled cursorily in Christology, soteriology, and the doctrine of Sacrament of Jonathan Edwards’ theology¹⁴, it has received some attention in soteriology but in a far more reduced version than in Calvin’s own theology.¹⁵ At least Edwards did explore the thought in depth,¹⁶ as a central theme in his soteriology. William B. Evans, testifies:

Edwards also speaks of a ‘natural’ or incarnational union of Christ himself with human nature. Furthermore, the theme of union with Christ continues to occupy a central place in his soteriological schema, functioning as an umbrella category for applied soteriology in general, just as it had for Calvin and federal orthodoxy.¹⁷

In the theology of Samuel Hopkins, a disciple of Edwards, the thought does feature slightly, and is restricted to soteriology,¹⁸ in which it is taken as a doctrine, especially that of Justification and Sanctification.¹⁹ For Timothy Dwight, this theme was no more than an interesting theological factor.²⁰

To summarize, we find that Calvin’s “union with Christ” thought was underestimated from the early stages of American Reformed theology (or Calvinistic Theology), and its scope reduced to a ‘doctrine.’ This tendency was continued from the pioneers of American Calvinistic theology to the latter theologians. Moreover, Calvin’s primary sources about that thought have been treated extremely slightly in their theology, or omitted completely.

that God is the only One. Even more, the Unitarians of America rejected Calvinism, and were convinced of the human being’s possibility of perfection.

¹³ Scott M. Manetsch, “Calvin in America,” 522.

¹⁴ About that fact, see as the following books. Jonathan Edwards, “Concerning Efficacious Grace,” in *The Works of President Edwards*, 4 Vols. (New York: Robert Carter, 1868), II : 595-6; idem, “Justification by Faith Alone,” in *The Works of President Edwards*, 4 Vols. (New York: Robert Carter, 1868), IV : 70-95; idem, *Treatise on Grace and Other Posthumously Published Writings*, ed. Paul Helm (London: James Clark, 1971), 31-74. It is quoted from William B. Evans’ book.

¹⁵ Sereno E. Dwight, *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, vols. 1, revised by Edward Hickman (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1974), 680-9.

¹⁶ See Jonathan R. Huggings, *Living Justification: A Historical-Theological Study of the Reformed Doctrine of Justification in the Writing of John Calvin, Jonathan Edwards, and N. T. Wright* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock, 2013), 97-152.

¹⁷ William B. Evans, *Imputation and Impartation: Union with Christ in American Reformed Theology* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2008), 95.

¹⁸ Augustus Hopkins Strong, *Union with Christ: A Chapter of Systematic Theology* (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1913).

¹⁹ Samuel Hopkins, *The System of Doctrines, Contained in Divine Revelation, Explained and Defended*, second ed., 1-2 vols. (Boston: Lincoln and Edmonds, 1811), I : 421-51, II : 40-340. It is quoted from William B. Evans’ book.

²⁰ Timothy Dwight, *Theology: Explained and Defended*, 11th ed., 4 vols. (New Haven: T. Dwight & Sons, 1984), 32-47. It is quoted from William B. Evans’ book.

3.1.2. The Old Princeton Theologians and Calvin's "Union with Christ" Thought

Princeton Seminary was established as a conservative Calvinistic theological seminary in 1812. The conservative Calvinistic theologians such as Archibald Alexander (1772-1851), Charles Hodge (1797-1878), Archibald Alexander Hodge (1823-1886), Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield (1851-1921), and John Gresham Machen (1881-1937) played formative roles in the establishment of the old Princeton Seminary. The Seminary later became the centre of American Reformed theology, and more than six thousand theological students were exposed to their theological influence.²¹ Later on (1929), Gresham and several colleagues established Westminster Theological Seminary to preserve the conservative Calvinistic theology (the legacy of Old Princeton) because of some theological differences.²²

On the other hand, the Calvin Theological Seminary of Dutch Reformed theology was established (1876), and the Dutch Calvinist theology of Abraham Kuyper (1837-1920), Herman Bavinck (1854-1921), and others entered more strongly into that Theological Seminary by way of a theologian such as Louis Berkhof (1873-1957).²³ Even though Berkhof attended the old Princeton Theological Seminary where he earned his B.D. in two years (1902-1904) under the tutelage of Warfield and Geerhardus Vos, he did not teach there. I introduce him here because some of representative pioneers of Korean Reformed theology were affected strongly by him, and he studied in the old Princeton.

Theologian Charles Hodge played a very important role in the reception of the conservative tendency of Calvinistic theology in American Reformed theology,²⁴ but the "union with Christ" thought, which pervades Calvin's theology, had been limited to a doctrine, mostly in soteriology (Atonement, Faith, Justification, Sanctification) and the

²¹ See John C. Vander Stelt, *Philosophy and Scripture: A Study in Old Princeton and Westminster Theology* (Marlton, New Jersey: Mack Publishing Company, 1978), 90-220; Mark A. Noll, "The Princeton Theology," in *The Princeton Theology: Reformed Theology in America*, ed. David F. Wells (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House Company, 1989), 15-35; William B. Evans, *Imputation and Impartation*, 188; Arnold Huijgen, "Calvin's Reception in the Nineteenth Century," in *The Calvin Handbook*, ed. Herman J. Selderhuis, trans. Judith J. Guder, Henry J. Baron, Randi H. Lundell, and Gerrit W. Sheeres (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 493-4.

²² Scott M. Manetsch, "Calvin in America," 522.

²³ Henry Zwaanstra, "Louis Berkhof," in *Reformed Theology in America: A History of its Modern Development*, ed. David F. Wells (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company), 153-85.

²⁴ David F. Wells, "Charles Hodge," in *The Princeton Theology: Reformed Theology in America*, ed. David F. Wells (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House Company, 1989), 39-58; Mark A. Noll, *Charles Hodge* (New York: Paulist Press, 1987), 1-3.

doctrine of Sacrament (Baptism and the Eucharist) in his theology.²⁵

Hodge hardly referred to Calvin's primary sources such as the *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, treatises, and the biblical commentaries. Similarly the importance of the "union with Christ" thought was reduced, also in the theology of his son, Archibald Alexander Hodge. Even though considering "union with Christ" as a doctrine subordinated to soteriology he applied the concept in a much more limited manner, and rarely referred to Calvin's primary sources.²⁶

Even though Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield accepted Calvin's theology as the most systematic among the old Princeton theologians,²⁷ he too saw Calvin's "union with Christ" thought only as a doctrine in soteriology.²⁸ Arnold Huijgen makes Warfield's theological inclination clear in the following words:

Calvin's reception at Princeton is concentrated around the *theologoumena* of the first book of the *Institutes*, specifically the doctrine of Scripture... Warfield, namely, offers his own division of the various doctrines of the *Institutes*... The result is that the proper dynamics of the intent and contents of Calvin's *Institutes* disappear from view, and the *Institutes* are cast into a more classic-scholastic arrangement. Also, as far as the contents are concerned, Warfield's attention — in spite of his objective agreement with Calvin — shifts to a more rational and metaphysical discourse that involves a shift away from Calvin's emphasis on *pietas*.²⁹

As is clear from Huijgen's statement, especially if Calvin's theology had been transformed in Warfield's theology, which inclined excessively toward the first book of the *Institutes*, as a more classic-scholastic structure or as a more rational and metaphysical discourse, the "union with Christ" thought had been more dogmatized in his theology. In fact, in his book *Calvin and Calvinism*, "union with Christ" is never considered.³⁰

²⁵ See Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, Vols. II (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1880), 581-83; idem, *Systematic Theology*, Vols. III (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1880), 104-6, 127, 227-30, 628-31; idem, *The Way of Life: A Guide to Christian Belief and Experience* (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1978), 581-3.

²⁶ A. A. Hodge, *Evangelical Theology: A Course of Popular Lectures* (Carlisle, Pennsylvania: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1976), 290-363.

²⁷ Arnold Huijgen, "Calvin's Reception in the Nineteenth Century," 493.

²⁸ See Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield, *Studies in Theology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1932), 302-9; idem, *Biblical and Theological Studies* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1952), 447-60; W. Andrew Hoffecker, *Piety and the Princeton Theologians: Archibald Alexander, Charles Hodge, and Benjamin Warfield* (Phillipsburg, New Jersey: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1981), 95-155.

²⁹ Arnold Huijgen, "Calvin's Reception in the Nineteenth Century," 493.

³⁰ Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield, *Calvin and Calvinism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1931). Warfield's theological inclination influenced some conservative groups within Korean Reformed

The biblical theologian John Gresham Machen maintained the conservative Calvinistic theology of the old Princeton Seminary³¹ at Westminster Theological Seminary, and published some books of systematic theology.³² In his work, Calvin's "union with Christ" thought had been located more narrowly into soteriology than was the case with the other old Princeton theologians.³³

In the same manner, Louis Berkhof of Calvin Theological Seminary and John Murray (1898-1975) of Westminster Seminary treated "union with Christ" as a doctrine subordinated to soteriology and the doctrine of Sacrament, similarly without any quotations from Calvin's primary sources.³⁴ In detail, Berkhof's quoted references concerning Calvin's "union with Christ" are the following: Herman Bavinck, *Gereformeerde Dogmatiek III* (Kampen: Bos, 1906-1911), 594 f; IV, 114, 226 f, 268 f; Abraham Kuyper, *Het Werk van den Heiligen Geest II* (Amsterdam: Wormser, 1888), 163-82; Robert L. Dabney, *Syllabus and Notes of the Course of Systematic and Polemic Theology* (St. Louis: Presbyterian Publishing Company of St. Louis, 1878), 612-7; A. H. Strong, *Systematic Theology* (Philadelphia: 1912), 795-808; John Dick, *Lectures on Theology* (Cincinnati: 1853), 36-365; Archibald A. Hodge, *Outlines of Theology* (New York: 1878), 482-6; idem, *The Atonement* (Philadelphia: 1867), 198-211; John McPherson, *Christian Dogmatics* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1898), 402-4; Milton Valentine, *Christian Theology II* (Philadelphia: Lutheran Publication Society, 1906), 275-7; Heinrich Schmid, *Doctrinal Theology of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* (Philadelphia: Lutheran Publication Society, 1889), 485-91, E. A. Litton, *Introduction to Dogmatic Theology: On the Basis of the Thirty-nine Articles* (London: Robert Scott, 1912), 321-2.³⁵ As the result, Berkhof even focused on "*unio mystica*," which is the essential feature of Calvin's "union with Christ," but depended exclusively on only secondary or tertiary

theology.

³¹ Ned B. Stonehouse, *J. Gresham Machen: A Biographical Memoir* (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1987), 430-68; George M. Marsden, *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1991), 182-201.

³² W. Stanford Reid, "J. Gresham Machen," in *The Princeton Theology: Reformed Theology in America*, ed. David F. Wells (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House Company, 1989), 95-110.

³³ See John Gresham Machen, *What is faith?* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1925), 161-182; idem, *The Christian Faith in the Modern World* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, Inc., 1936); idem, *Christianity and Liberalism* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1946), 117-80; idem, *What Is Christianity? and Other Addresses*, ed. Ned Bernard Stonehouse (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1951), 201-10.

³⁴ See Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1976), 418-20, 447-53. See also John Murray, *Collected Writing of John Murray: Select Lectures in Systematic Theology*, Vols. 2 (Carlisle, Pennsylvania: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1976), 123-384; idem, *Redemption: Accomplished and Applied* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1980), 161-73.

³⁵ Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 447-53.

sources.

As mentioned, the conservative American Calvinistic theologies of the old Princeton theologians had a close relationship with Korean Reformed theology, having influenced the reception of Calvinistic theology in Korea strongly. Their understanding of “union with Christ” is incomparable with Calvin’s vision, but was transplanted to Korean Reformed theology in that reduced condition. Consequently the superficial treatment of the concept was passed on to Korean Reformed theology, creating a theological limitation which is also present in American Calvinistic theology.

3.1.3. Other Theologians and Calvin’s “Union with Christ” Thought

Other representative theologians who affected the reception or development of Calvinistic theology in America include James Henley Thornwell (1812-1862), Robert L. Dabney (1820-1898), Anthony A. Hoekema (1913-1988), and William G. T. Shedd (1920-1994), etc. James H. Thornwell of Columbia Seminary was especially influential in the Southern Presbyterian Church,³⁶ but his theology did not examine Calvin’s “union with Christ” thought extensively. He referred slightly to the “union with Christ” in soteriology and ecclesiology and hardly quoted Calvin’s primary sources.³⁷

Robert L. Dabney of the old Union Theological Seminary was probably the greatest, and certainly the most prolific, Southern Presbyterian theologian of nineteenth-century America, and was influenced strongly by Charles Hodge,³⁸ and his treatment of “union with Christ” reveals influences from Calvin and the *Westminster Confession of Faith*.³⁹ Yet he too treats “union with Christ” mostly as a doctrine subordinated to soteriology and the doctrine of the Sacrament, again with scant evidence of primary Calvin sources.⁴⁰

³⁶ Luder G. Whitlock, Jr., “James Henley Thornwell,” in *Reformed Theology in America: A History of Its Modern Development*, ed. David F. Wells (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1985), 232-40.

³⁷ James Henley Thornwell, *The Collected Writings of James Henley Thornwell, D.D., LL.D.: Theological and Ethical*, ed. J. B. Adger and J. L. Girardeau, Vols. II (Richmond, Virginia: 1871), 178-395; idem, *The Collected Writings of James Henley Thornwell, D.D., LL.D.: Theological and Controversial*, ed. J. B. Adger and J. L. Girardeau, Vols. III (Richmond, Virginia: 1871), 396-401; Morton Howison Smith, *Studies in Southern Presbyterian Theology* (Amsterdam: Drukkerij en Uitgeverij Jacob Van Campen, 1962), 121-82.

³⁸ Douglas Floyd Kelly, “Robert Lewis Dabney,” in *Southern Reformed Theology: Reformed Theology in America*, ed. David F. Wells (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House Company, 1989), 37; Thomas Cary Johnson, *The life and letters of Robert Lewis Dabney* (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1977), 556.

³⁹ Bruce Demarest, *The Cross and Salvation: The Doctrine of Salvation* (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway Books, 2006), 325.

⁴⁰ Robert Lewis Dabney, *Lectures in Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, reprint, 1972), 612-15.

Calvin's soteriology was set out systematically by Anthony A. Hoekema of the Calvin Theological Seminary. Although the "union with Christ" thought is dealt with more systematically in its scope, a theological limitation remains in the same way as the others, given that "union with Christ" is placed as a doctrine in soteriology with diminished importance. His work also reflects mostly secondary or tertiary references rather than Calvin's primary work.⁴¹ In the same manner, "union with Christ" had been thoroughly dealt with in subordinated condition to soteriology in the theology of William G. T. Shedd of the old Union Theological Seminary. Calvin's primary sources are also quoted rarely in his theology.⁴²

These theologians represent those who had an important influence on the reception and development of Calvinistic Theology in America. Given that there are few quotations from Calvin's primary sources, their theology suffers some crucial limitations. One can argue that they dealt thoroughly with "union with Christ" but that they limit this thought to a doctrine subsumed under soteriology and the doctrine of the Sacrament, thereby weakening its importance and diminishing its scope from what Calvin had presented originally.

Nevertheless, it is not that the systematic research of Calvin's "union with Christ" thought has never been done in American Reformed theology. Lewis B. Smedes (1921-2002), who was influential in neo-orthodox Calvin theology, rediscovered the importance of "union with Christ." He dealt with the thought more extensively in Christology, Pneumatology, the Trinity, ecclesiology, and soteriology in his theology than any other American Calvinistic theologian. Furthermore, he accomplished a remarkable theological rediscovery in dealing with "union with Christ" not only with regard to the doctrinal aspect, but also as a biblical and theological thought.

Yet, although Smedes point in the direction to uncover and systematically discuss the importance of Calvin's "union with Christ" thought, he did not attempt an extensive systematic research based on Calvin's own theology. In his book *Union With Christ: A Biblical View of the New Life in Jesus Christ*, he introduced the thought mostly from the Pauline theology excluding the Johannine theology, the General letters, and the Gospels. Thus a more thorough discussion concerning the structure of "union with Christ" thought and its

⁴¹ Anthony A. Hoekema, *The Christian Looks at Himself* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1975); idem, *Saved by Grace* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1989), 54-67.

⁴² William G. T. Shedd, *A History of Christian Doctrine*, Vols. II (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1877); idem, *Calvinism: Pure and Mixed, A Defence of the Westminster Standards* (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1986), 84-131.

relation with other doctrines, are still called for.⁴³

Except for Smedes, other theologians have also very recently started to re-discover the importance of Calvin's "union with Christ" thought, and to research it systematically, including his primary original sources. In detail, the most important volumes with reference to "union with Christ" in American Reformed theology during the last few decades are the following: Cornelis P. Venema, *Accepted and Renewed in Christ: The Twofold Grace of God and the Interpretation of Calvin's Theology* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007); Dennis E. Tamburello, *Union with Christ: John Calvin and the Mysticism of St. Bernard* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1994); John Meyendorff and Robert Tobias, *Salvation in Christ: A Lutheran-Orthodox Dialogue* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1992); J. Todd Billings, *Calvin, Participation, and the Gift: The Activity of Believers in Union with Christ* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); idem, *Union with Christ: Reframing Theology and Ministry for the Church* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2011); Kevin Dixon Kennedy, *Union with Christ and the Extent of the Atonement in Calvin* (New York: Peter Lang, 2002); Mark A. Garcia, *Life in Christ: Union with Christ and Twofold Grace in Calvin's Theology* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock, 2008); A. Blake White, *Union with Christ: Last Adam and Seed of Abraham* (Maryland: New Covenant Media, 2012); William B. Evans, *Studies in Christian History and Thought: Imputation and Impartation* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock, 2008).

Also, as a doctrine of soteriology, treatises or research which deal with "union with Christ" systematically in American Reformed theology are the following: Bruce Demarest, *The Cross and Salvation* (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway Books, 2006); Charles Partee, *Calvin and Classical Philosophy* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1977); idem, "Calvin's Central Dogma Again," in *The Organizational Structure of Calvin's Theology*, Vols. 7, ed. Richard C. Gamble (New York: Garland Publishing, INC., 1992); idem, *The Theology of John Calvin* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2008); I. John Hesselink, *Calvin's First Catechism: A Commentary* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997); J. Todd Billings, "John Calvin: United to God through Christ," in *Partakers of the Divine Nature: The History and Development of Deification in the Christian Traditions*, ed. Michael J. Christensen and Jeffery A. Wittung (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2007); Lewis B. Smedes, *The*

⁴³ Lewis B. Smedes, *All Things Made New: A Theology of Man's Union with Christ* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1970); this book was republished as Lewis B. Smedes, *Union With Christ: A Biblical View of the New Life in Jesus Christ* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1983).

Incarnation: Trends in Modern Anglican Thought (Amsterdam: J. H. Kok N. V. Kampen, 1953); Michael Horton, *Covenant and Salvation* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2007); idem, *The Christian Faith: A Systematic Theology for Pilgrims on the Way*; Randall C. Gleason, *John Calvin and John Owen on Mortification: A Comparative Study in Reformed Spirituality* (New York: Peter Lang, 1995); Ronald S. Wallace, *Calvin's Doctrine of the Christian Life* (Tyler, TX: Geneva Divinity School Press, 1982); William A. Mueller, "The Mystical Union," in *Contemporary Evangelical Thought: Basic Christian Doctrines*, ed. Carl F. H. Henry (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 1971).

Even if some of the specialized theological publications dealing with "union with Christ" systematically in American Reformed theology are omitted in these references, they are probably not many. Besides these, almost all books of systematic theology explain "union with Christ" mostly as a mere doctrine subordinated to soteriology and the doctrine of the Sacrament, or never deal with that thought.

To summarize, the theological limitations with regards to Calvin's "union with Christ" thought have continued as a theological structure in American Calvinistic theology, although one might point to some redress in this regard. What then are the theological limitations of Calvin's "union with Christ" thought in American Calvinistic theology and what are the concrete causes thereof?

3.2. The Theological Limitations and Causes of Calvin's "Union with Christ" Thought in American Reformed Theology

Certain theological discontinuities are exposed, between Calvin's own theology and American Reformed theology, given that "union with Christ" thought has been dealt with comprehensively in Calvin's own theology, but has been treated mostly as only a doctrinal aspect that is subordinated to soteriology and the doctrine of the Sacrament in American Reformed theology.

Moreover, a characteristic feature of Calvin's theology is its balance: he does not deal with 'theology or life,' 'Bible or doctrine,' 'knowing or practicing,' 'theory or application,' or 'dogma or the life of piety', but rather with 'theology *and* life,' 'Bible *and* doctrine' etcetera. Thus these terms are not treated separately but as twins, or as two wheels always moving together organically while being united as one.⁴⁴ In the light of this aspect of

⁴⁴ For more detail on its contents, see Chapter Four.

Calvin's work, namely his balanced theology, those theological gaps of "union with Christ" present a continual loss for theology. Calvin's own emphasis is revealed in the following citation:

And this is the place to upbraid those who, having nothing but the name and badge of Christ, yet wish to call themselves "Christians." Yet, how shamelessly do they boast of his sacred name? Indeed, there is no intercourse with Christ save for those who have perceived the right understanding of Christ from the word of the gospel. *Yet the apostle says that all those who were not taught that they must put on him (Christ) have not rightly learned Christ...* Therefore, it is proved that they have falsely, and also unjustly, pretended the knowledge of Christ, whatever they meanwhile learnedly and volubly prate about the gospel. *For it is a doctrine not of the tongue but of life*⁴⁵ (own parenthesis).

Calvin's "union with Christ" is a crucial thought that has been dealt with comprehensively as being interconnected with other doctrines (as will be shown in more detail later on in the dissertation), in the process enabling a theology that keeps 'dogma and the life of piety' in balance. Theological work that analyzes the theological differences and grounds for the "union with Christ" between Calvin's own theology and American Calvinistic theology, with the aim of re-evaluation and re-application of Calvin's theological influence, will help to overcome the separation or the weakening of the balance of 'dogma and the life of piety,' which embodies the weakness of much of contemporary theology.

3.2.1. The Absence of Research on Primary Calvin Sources

The limitation of the scope of Calvin's "union with Christ" thought that existed in American Reformed theology is directly related to the absence of research about his primary original sources in Korean Reformed theology. In practice, as mentioned, from the early American Reformed theologians such as Jonathan Edwards, Samuel Hopkins, and Timothy Dwight, and Princeton Seminary's Charles Hodge and Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield, and also to 20th century theologians Louis Berkhof, John Murray, Anthony A. Hoekema, all limited Calvin's "union with Christ" thought to soteriology or the doctrine of the Sacraments. A common aspect in their theology is a poverty of references to Calvin's primary sources.

The period of translation of Calvin sources goes back to the 16th century.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ *Institutes*, 3.6.4.

⁴⁶ See Edward Dommen, "Translating Calvin into English," in *John Calvin Rediscovered: His Social*

Institutes of the Christian Religion, the French edition, was published in 1560, the Dutch edition also in 1560, and the English edition after 1561,⁴⁷ with the English editions of Calvin's other theological works published in the latter half of the 16th century.⁴⁸ Thus the reception of Calvinistic theology as well as Calvin's primary sources occurred in the early periods. Yet the interconnection across doctrinal *loci* has for the most part gone unrecognized, with an overwhelming recourse to secondary and tertiary sources.

The "union with Christ" thought is intensely involved with relation to other doctrines in Calvin's entire theology, recurring in variously formulated expressions in all of the four volumes of *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. The limited application, with weakening implications, of the "union with Christ" thought has resulted, at least in part, from the lack of systematic research of Calvin's primary sources in American Reformed theology.

3.2.2. Understanding Calvin's "Union with Christ" Thought as only a Doctrinal Aspect

James Parker's following statement about the importance of Calvin's primary sources is very meaningful: "Students will discover... that Calvin's own direct mention will be more abundant and more directly worthwhile than all interpreters of Calvin's theology."⁴⁹ Nevertheless, even if referring to Calvin's original sources, the neglect of Calvin's theology as all-inclusive, integrated and comprehensive will lead to limitations in interpreting his theology accurately. The case of Calvin's "union with Christ" has shown that such limitations existed in American Reformed theology.

Paradoxically despite extensive research on Calvin's theology, there have not been any attempts to deal with "union with Christ" as "a theme" or "a thought," but only as a dogma, so that the all-inclusive and comprehensive aspect as centralized and emphasized in his *Institutes of the Christian Religion* has not been sufficiently recognized.

Until now American Reformed theology has overlooked for the most part the

and *Economic Thought* (Princeton Theological Seminary Studies in Reformed Theology and History), ed. Edward Dommen and James D. Bratt (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2007), 135.

⁴⁷ See Ian Hazlett, "Calvin and the British Isles," in *The Calvin Handbook*, ed. Herman J. Selderhuis, trans. Judith J. Guder, Henry J. Baron, Randi H. Lundell, and Gerrit W. Sheeres (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 118-25.

⁴⁸ See Herman J. Selderhuis, "The *Institutes*," in *The Calvin Handbook*, ed. Herman J. Selderhuis, trans. Judith J. Guder, Henry J. Baron, Randi H. Lundell, and Gerrit W. Sheeres (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 199-206.

⁴⁹ Jean Cadier, *The Man God Mastered*, trans. O. R. Johnston (London: Inter-varsity Press, 1960), 187.

importance of a more comprehensive research on “union with Christ,” appearing indifferent to the inter-connection between this central thought and the various other doctrines and theologies in Calvin’s theology. Admittedly they have done thorough theological analysis of the concept of what the doctrine of “union with Christ” is in itself. As a consequence, the formula of only the doctrinal aspect caused the theological limitation, namely a one-sided vision of Calvin’s “union with Christ” thought, as a doctrine.

Although some theologians dealt with “union with Christ” as an aspect of Christology, they had not thoroughly accepted Calvin’s extensive scope about that thought. Therefore, the most important reason that the “union with Christ” thought has been confined to a limited scope in American Reformed theology lies in my view in limiting to a mere doctrine and therefore not sufficiently recognizing its broader range. At present, attempts have been made to approach “union with Christ” as ‘a theme,’ ‘a principle,’ or “a method,” not only as a doctrinal aspect, but further systematic research is certainly required.

There have been frequent attempts to compare Calvin’s theology and Calvinism.⁵⁰ In recent years, especially, an interesting and important new attempt has been made to compare Calvin’s “union with Christ” and American Reformed theology’s “union with Christ.”⁵¹ Regrettably those attempts have also mostly been limited to a ‘doctrinal approach’ within soteriology and ecclesiology and did not access the concept through more integrated approaches, that is, as a central thought, methodology, theme, main principle, form, structure, extent, contents, and so on. While new attempts still seem unable to cast off the methodology that persists only in the doctrinal approach, the scope of research in American Reformed theology has developed from its original version.

For example, it is meaningful that William B. Evans compared “union with Christ” in Calvin’s theology and American Reformed theology, and maintained that:

Many Reformed theologians from Calvin onward have attempted to subsume all of applied soteriology (acceptance with God and transformation of life) under the rubric “union with Christ.” But this formal agreement should not be allowed to mask fundamental and pervasive disagreements among prominent representatives of the tradition regarding the substance and implications of the theme. For this reason, this

⁵⁰ See Benjamin B. Warfield, *Calvin and Calvinism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1931), 353-369. See also James Torrance, “Interpreting the Word by the Light of Christ or the Light of Nature? Calvin, Calvinism, and Barth,” in *Calviniana: Ideas and Influence of Jean Calvin* (Sixteenth-Century Essays and Studies, vol. 10), ed. R. V. Schuncker (St Louis, MO: Sixteenth-Century Journal Publishers, 1988), 255-67.

⁵¹ See Michael Horton, *The Christian Faith: A Systematic Theology for Pilgrims on the Way*, 587-619. See also William B. Evans, *Imputation and Impartation: Union with Christ in American Reformed Theology*.

work will often refer to “union with Christ” as a “motif” or “theme” rather than a “doctrine.” We will see that a number of divergent conceptions of “union with Christ” have competed for recognition within the tradition.⁵²

Even though Evans locates the cause of the limits of the scope in American Reformed theology about Calvin’s “union with Christ,” and to treat it not as a doctrine but as a “motif” he seems to located it still within the two categories of soteriology and ecclesiology.⁵³

In summing up, the research on Calvin’s “union with Christ” thought in American Reformed theology has been approached as ‘a doctrinal aspect’ from the early periods onwards. All-inclusive and comprehensive research dealing with the interconnection of Calvin’s entire theology is still called for, albeit that some studies started to point in that direction.

3.2.3. Problematic Theological Interpretations of Calvin’s “Union with Christ” thought

The limitation of scope and theology of the “union with Christ” thought in American Reformed theology has led to a one-sided interpretation. Regarding “union with Christ,” Calvin emphasized “immanent union,” “spiritual union,” or “substantial union” through the Holy Spirit, but American Reformed theology, especially the conservative Calvinistic theology, has preferred the aspect of ‘the judicial or legal union.’⁵⁴

In other words, Calvin indicated that pneumatological union with Christ, which is the “mystical union (*mystica unio*),”⁵⁵ is the outcome of the organic or personal unionistic work of the Holy Spirit, and also extensively added such thoughts of “union with the Triune God,”⁵⁶ even though those were extremely concise statements, to his entire theology. This

⁵² William B. Evans, *Imputation and Impartation: Union with Christ in American Reformed Theology*, 2.

⁵³ Ibid. See this Evans’ entire whole Chapters.

⁵⁴ See Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 452. See also Geerhardus Vos, “The Alleged Legalism in Paul’s Doctrine of Justification,” in *Redemptive History and Biblical Interpretation: The Shorter Writings of Geerhardus Vos*, ed. Rechar B. Gaffin Jr. (Phillipsburg, New Jersey: Presbyterian And Reformed Publishing Co, 1980), ix-xxiii.

⁵⁵ See John Calvin, *Commentary on the Gospel according to John*, trans. William Pringle (Edinburgh: Calvin Translation Society, 1843-1855), 107; *Institutes*, 2.2.16; 2.3.1; 2.3.6; 2.12.7; 3.1.3; 3.11.10; 4.17.1; 4.17.3; 4.17.5; 4.17.7; 4.17.8; 4.17.9; 4.17.10; 4.17.11.

⁵⁶ See *Institutes*, 1.13.16; 1.13.24; 1.15.5; 1.15.6; 2.2.1; 2.3.7; 2.3.8; 2.3.10; 2.8.34; 2.8.51; 2.10.2; 2.10.7; 2.10.7; 2.10.8; 2.10.15; 2.8.23; 2.11.10; 2.11.11; 2.12.1; 2.12.6; 2.14.3; 2.15.4; 2.15.5; 2.16.3; 2.16.14; 2.16.16; 3.1.1; 3.1.2; 3.1.3; 3.2.1; 3.2.12; 3.2.33; 3.2.35; 3.2.39; 3.3.14; 3.6.2; 3.11.5; 3.11.8; 3.11.9; 3.11.12; 3.14.6; 3.14.9; 3.14.18; 3.14.19; 3.17.5; 3.17.6; 3.18.3; 3.23.14; 3.24.1; 3.24.2; 3.25.2; 3.25.10; 4.1.2; 4.1.3;

phenomenon was viewed to be a natural outcome that Calvin pursued thoroughly in his theological works according to Trinitarian thinking.

By contrast, American Reformed theology has a tendency to deal with “union with Christ” in justification and sanctification, because it was approached as a doctrine of soteriology from the beginning, not a theological thought. They considered the “union” mostly from the legal or judicial perspective. But this is closer to Luther’s than to Calvin’s theology. If “mystical union” is subordinated to “forensic union,” it might also be misunderstood as a formal ‘ideological union.’⁵⁷ Geerhardus Vos⁵⁸ (1862-1947)’s following statement exposes this clearly:

Naturally the problem becomes most accentuated where it touches the center of Paul’s teaching. This, we may still insist, is the doctrine of justification. Recent attempts to dislodge it from this position, and to make the mystical aspect of the believer’s relation to Christ, as mediated by the Spirit, entirely coordinated with it – so that each of the two covers the entire range of religious experience, and becomes in reality a duplicate of the other in a different sphere – we cannot recognize as correct from the apostle’s own point of view. In our opinion Paul consciously and consistently subordinated the mystical aspect of the relation to Christ to the forensic one. Paul’s mind was to such an extent forensically oriented that he regarded the entire complex of subjective spiritual blessings enjoyed by the believer as the direct outcome of the forensic work of Christ applied in justification. The mystical is based on the forensic, not the forensic on the mystical.⁵⁹

It seems that he presents a false dilemma, and also commits a logical error. In a logical point of view, for justification (justified as the righteousness) as the “forensic union” to be possible subjectively (or individually) to the sinful person, the “mystical union” that is

4.1.20; 4.6.5; 4.14.16; 4.15.6; 4.17.10; 4.17.12; 4.17.18; 4.17.31; 4.17.33; 4.17.42; John Calvin, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, in Calvin’s New Testament Commentaries, ed. David W. Torrance and Thomas F. Torrance (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), 138.

⁵⁷ For more detail on Luther’s “forensic union,” see as the following treatises: Simo Peura, “Christ as Favor and Gift (donum): The Challenge of Luther’s Understanding of Justification,” in *Union with Christ: The New Finnish Interpretation of Luther*, ed. Cal E. Braaten and Robert W. Jenson (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1998), 42, 67; Carl E. Braaten, “Response to Simo Peura, ‘Christ as Favor and Gift’,” in *Union with Christ: The New Finnish Interpretation of Luther*, ed. Cal E. Braaten and Robert W. Jenson (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1998), 70-75; Tuomo Mannermaa, “Justification and Theosis in Lutheran-Orthodox Perspective,” in *Union with Christ: The New Finnish Interpretation of Luther*, ed. Cal E. Braaten and Robert W. Jenson (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1998), 27-29.

⁵⁸ Geerhardus Vos, “The Alleged Legalism in Paul’s Doctrine of Justification,” ix-xxiii. Geerhardus Vos was born of German parents in Heerenveen in the province of Friesland, the Netherlands, in 1862, but emigrated to Grand Rapids, Michigan in the United States in 1981. He has spent his life lecturing at Princeton Seminary.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 384.

“union with Christ” through the Holy Spirit should precede it in the first instance.⁶⁰ When the “mystical union” by the Holy Spirit should precede it, the “faith union” is also possible. Calvin, therefore, has frequently expressed this necessary and inseparable relation of the “pneumatic union” and the “faith union.”⁶¹

On the other hand, speaking practically, Calvin also emphasizes that the imputation of Christ’s righteousness flows into sinful nature through faith by the Holy Spirit. Mark A. Garcia’s following statement speaks pertinent to this matter:

*But in Calvin’s framework within which the life of obedience or sanctification by the Spirit does not flow from the imputation of Christ’s righteousness but from Christ himself with whom the Spirit has united believers. In other words, for Calvin sanctification does not flow from justification. They are not related as cause and effect. Rather, together they are ‘effects’ or, better, aspects of union with Christ”*⁶² (own parenthesis).

Even though the Holy Spirit and faith are an inseparable relation, the initiative of faith is not from us who have the depraved sinful nature, but obviously from the Holy Spirit, who is the Spirit of Christ.⁶³ For that reason, Calvin has frequently emphasized that justification and sanctification are the effects of “union with Christ.”⁶⁴ It is my statement, therefore, that the “mystical union” with Christ through the Holy Spirit is to be the major premise which decides the “forensic union.” When it is viewed in this way, the thought of

⁶⁰ *Institutes*, 3.11.21.

⁶¹ *Institutes*, 2.16.14; 3.1.4; 3.2.1; 3.2.8; 3.2.24; 3.2.30; 3.2.35; 3.15.6; 4.6.10; 4.17.11; 4.17.13; 4.17.34.

⁶² See Mark A. Garcia, *Life in Christ: Union with Christ and Twofold Grace in Calvin’s Theology*, 146. See also Ro. 6:4-7; 10-11; Col. 1:27-29; 2:2-3.

⁶³ *Institutes*, 2.3.6; 2.3.8; 2.3.9; 2.3.10; 2.3.11; 3.2.35; 3.2.39; 3.6.2; 3.11.7; 3.11.8; 3.11.9; 3.11.23; 3.15.5; 3.15.6; 3.16.1; 4.6.9; 4.16.31; 4.17.12; 4.17.30; 4.17.31; *Comm. on Jn. 7:39*; *Comm. on Jn. 12:45*; *Comm. on Jn. 8:19*; *Comm. on Jn. 15:7*; *Comm. on Ac. 15:9*; *Comm. on Ac. 16:31*; *Comm. on Gal. 2:20*; *Comm. on Eph. 5:31*; *Comm. on Heb. 5:9*; *Comm. on 1 Jn. 4:15*.

⁶⁴ Regarding Calvin’s emphasis on justification and sanctification, which are the effects of “union with Christ,” see the following: *Institutes*, 3.11.1; Richard B. Gaffin Jr., “Justification and Union with Christ (3.11-18),” in *Theological Guide to Calvin’s Institutes: Essays and Analysis*, ed. David W. Hall and Peter A. Lillback (Phillipsburg, New Jersey: P&R Publishing, 2008), 253-62; Philip Graham Ryken, “The Believer’s Union with Christ,” in *John Calvin: A Heart for Devotion Doctrine & Doxology*, ed. Burk Parsons (Lake Mary, Florida: Reformation Trust Publishing, 2008), 196-200; Barbara Pitkin, “Faith and Justification,” in *The Calvin Handbook*, ed. Herman J. Selderhuis, trans. Judith J. Guder, Henry J. Baron, Randi H. Lundell, and Gerrit W. Sheeres (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 299; Randall C. Zachman, “Communio cum Christo,” in *The Calvin Handbook*, ed. Herman J. Selderhuis, trans. Judith J. Guder, Henry J. Baron, Randi H. Lundell, and Gerrit W. Sheeres (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 369; Paul Helm, *Calvin: A Guide for the Perplexed* (London: T & T Clark, 2008), 70-4; Guenther H. Haas, “Calvin’s Ethics,” in *John Calvin*, ed. Donald K. McKim (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 94; Alister E. McGrath, *Reformation Thought: An Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), 125; J. Todd Billings, “Union with Christ and the Double Grace: Calvin’s Theology and Its Early Reception,” in *Calvin’s Theology and Its Reception: Disputes, Developments, and New Possibilities*, ed. J. Todd Billings and I. John Hesselink (Louisville, Kentucky: John Knox Press, 2012), 56.

“Trinitarian union” through the Holy Spirit becomes the centre of soteriology in Calvin’s theology and also leads its entire doctrine, because of the Trinitarian structure. In addition, it retains an effective relation with other dogmas.

It comes to the fore as well in Louis Berkhof’s following statement about the significance of the “mystical union,” which also pursues the doctrinal understanding that leans toward one side regarding Calvin’s “union with Christ:”

The mystical union in the sense in which we are now speaking of it is not the judicial ground, on the basis of which we become partakers of the riches that are in Christ. It is sometimes said that the merits of Christ cannot be imputed to us as long as we are not in Christ, since it is only on the basis of our oneness with Him that such an imputation could be reasonable. *But this view fails to distinguish between our legal unity with Christ and our spiritual oneness with Him, and is a falsification of the fundamental element in the doctrine of redemption, namely, of the doctrine of justification.* Justification is always a declaration of God, not on the basis of an existing condition, but on that of a gracious imputation, — a declaration which is not in harmony with the existing condition of the sinner. The judicial ground for all the special grace which we receive lies in the fact that the righteousness of Christ is freely imputed to us⁶⁵ (own parenthesis).

Berkhof also maintains that the fundamental element in the doctrine of redemption is the justification, rather than the “Trinitarian union” (that is “mystical union”) through the working of the Holy Spirit. He recognizes that “legal union” is the subordinate concept, but “mystical union” is the subordinate concept of the judicial union. This resulted in Berkhof understanding “union with Christ” as a doctrine that is subordinated in soteriology, unlike Calvin. Therefore, he had stated a contradiction that, (before there is a gracious —priceless— practical imputation of the “righteousness of Christ,” which is “union with Christ” through the antecedent working of the Holy Spirit) the declaration of God as the justification is an essential prerequisite to the sinner.

Michael Horton, who explicates the *Institutes* 3.16.1 as explaining the relationship between “union with Christ” and “justification and sanctification” makes the following comment:

Where medieval theology, codified at Trent, developed its *ordo salutis* by appealing to various infusions of a gracious substance into the soul,

⁶⁵ Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 452.

enabling meritorious cooperation on our part, Calvin insists that all of our blessings – justification and sanctification – are found only in Christ, through the Spirit. Calvin recognizes here that justification need not be *confused* with sanctification by means of an all-encompassing ontology of union in order to recognize the *inseparability* of the legal (forensic) and organic (effective) aspects of that union.⁶⁶

Horton's statement seems to explain the indivisibility of Calvin's "mystical union" and Luther's "legal (forensic) aspect of union."⁶⁷ This is illuminated by Calvin's crucial and distinctive interpretations, but he nevertheless stresses the legal aspect of the "nature of the union." He writes: "*The motif of mystical union has often been presented as an alternative to the forensic (legal) motifs of redemption, especially vicarious substitution and justification...Through the interpretive lens of union with Christ we can move beyond the false choice of a legal, judicial, and passive salvation on one hand and a relational, mystical, and transformative participation in Christ on the other. Nevertheless, as I argued in relation to Christ's atoning work, the integral unity of these motifs is possible only because the latter is grounded in the former.*"⁶⁸ (own emphasis.)

To summarize, the difference of the understanding of "union with Christ" is a decisive reason to distinguish its theological scope. In the Trinitarian thought that covers Calvin's entire theology Calvin seems to concentrate more on the "substantial" and "organic" union through the Holy Spirit and understands the "union" in this sense. For this reason, it appears extensively throughout his theological works. American Reformed theology, however, approaches almost exclusively the "union" as a doctrine of soteriology, and then emphasizes the effective aspect of the doctrine, namely, the "legal aspect." Accordingly, these approaches have confined and limited Calvin's thoughts on "union with Christ."

In summing up, American Reformed theology has largely accepted Calvin's theology, but "union with Christ," which is a central thought in Calvin's theology, have been underutilized as an all-encompassing thought that stretches wider than the doctrine of soteriology. Moreover, "Union with Christ" should be related extensively to other doctrines.

In addition, the extent of Calvin's thought on "union with Christ" is comprehensively located in theological works in a larger scope than that which American Reformed theology has allowed it concerning the aspects of structure, theme, motif, method,

⁶⁶ Michael Horton, *The Christian Faith: A Systematic Theology for Pilgrims on the Way*, 599.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 594. Horton refers to Luther's statement that "through faith in Christ, therefore, Christ's righteousness becomes our righteousness and all that he has becomes ours; rather, he himself becomes ours."

⁶⁸ Michael Horton, *The Christian Faith: A Systematic Theology for Pilgrims on the Way*, 588-603.

thought, extent, principle, doctrine, practical influence, and so on.

American Reformed theology's limitation of the scope of "union with Christ" has had a direct theological influence on Korean Reformed theology. It is true that even though Korean Christianity and theology developed rapidly over a short time, and that various books and articles of Calvin scholars are being translated and becoming wide-spread, the systematic research of "union with Christ" is still marginalized at present. Of course, it is also true that the thought has been dealt with in connection with other theological and pastoral themes or as the forms of preaching.

Nevertheless, in Korean Reformed theology it has not been sufficiently recognized or developed. Research into the original scope and the importance of Calvin's thoughts on "union with Christ" is therefore to be welcomed.

PART TWO

“Union with Christ” Thought in Calvin’s Theology: The Metaphorical Expressions and Theological Meanings

For Christ left us in such a way that his presence might be more useful to us—a presence that had been confined in a humble abode of flesh so long as he sojourned on earth... The Lord himself also testified this to his disciples: “*It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Holy Spirit will not come*” (John 16:7 p.)... Indeed, we see how much more abundantly he then poured out his Spirit, how much more wonderfully he advanced his Kingdom, how much greater power he displayed both in helping his people and in scattering his enemies. Carried up into heaven, therefore, he withdrew his bodily presence from our sight (Acts 1:9), not to cease to be present with believers still on their earthly pilgrimage, but to rule heaven and earth with a more immediate power. *But by his ascension he fulfilled what he had promised: that he would be with us even to the end of the world.* As his body was raised up above all the heavens, so his power and energy were diffused and spread beyond all the bounds of heaven and earth... *Therefore, we always have Christ according to the presence of majesty.*¹ (own emphasis.)

Put in simple terms, the doctrine of union with Christ teaches that the Holy Spirit joins believers to Jesus by faith, and that by virtue of this spiritual bond we receive both Christ Himself and all His benefits. *Calvin believed this doctrine to be of the highest importance, one of the great mysteries of the gospel.*² (own emphasis.)

¹ *Institutes*, 2.16.14.

² Philip Graham Ryken, “The Believer’s Union with Christ,” in *John Calvin: A Heart for Devotion Doctrine & Doxology*, ed. Burk Parsons (Lake Mary, FL: Reformation Trust Publishing, 2008), 191-2.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Metaphorical Expressions of the Various Notions of Calvin's "Union with Christ" Thought

4.1. Various Aspects of the Comprehensiveness of Calvin's "Union with Christ" Thought

Calvin deals with the "union with Christ" thought comprehensively, as playing a crucial role and being a 'core thought' in his entire theology; it becomes operative as an 'implicit (or indirect) formula' by his employing a variety of metaphorical, synonymous expressions, rather than a clearly 'explicit (or direct) formula.' The phrase 'explicit (or direct) formula' means the direct use of the words "union with Christ."

On the contrary, the 'implicit (or indirect) formula' means that rather than direct use of the phrase "union with Christ," it appears as an indirect formula, implied in other forms such as 'metaphorical expressions' and 'unitive notions' that connote the thought. In order to understand Calvin's "union with Christ" thought more precisely, we need to analyze it through a more comprehensive method than before, applying a more inclusive research methodology to cover 'the various expression forms,' 'the various theological meanings,' 'the relationship of other doctrines,' 'the relationship to his theology's structure,' and 'the aspect of scope or frequency' of the "union with Christ" thought in Calvin's theology.

In particular, Calvin's *Institutes* is a condensed version of 'his thought' or 'his entire theology' and its importance is very well known. The statements by Herman J. Selderhuis, I. John Hesselink and François Wendel, namely "Calvin has been characterized as the man of *one* book, and that one book is he *Institutes* in the 1559 edition," or "The whole of Calvinism is in the *Institutes*"³ emphasize the centrality of Calvin's *Institutes* in his theology. Yet one should note that Calvin's theological works are much too comprehensive to be limited by a sole focus on the *Institutes* or reduced to one book alone. Nevertheless, I agree

³ I. John Hesselink, "Calvin's Theology," in *The Cambridge Companion to John Calvin*, ed. Donald M. McKim (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 75; Herman J. Selderhuis, "The *Institutes*" in *The Calvin Handbook*, ed. Herman J. Selderhuis, trans. Judith J. Guder, Henry J. Baron, Randi H. Lundell, and Gerrit W. Sheeres (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 199; François Wendel, *Calvin: The Origins and Development of His Religious Thought*, trans. Philip Mairet (London: Collins, 1963), 111.

with the above position that we can understand Calvin's thought and theological works through his *Institutes*.⁴

François Wendel's following statement about the importance of *Institutes* correctly indicates the book's role and position in Calvin's entire theology:

The whole of Calvinism is in the *Institutes* – a work of capital importance, the work most valued by Calvin, who spent all his life revising and reshaping as well as enriching it. All his other works – commentaries, controversies, smaller dogmatic or moral treatises – are related to it like advanced redoubts meant to defend the heart of the place against the enemy.' Not only do the *Institutes* occupy the central place in Calvin's literary production, so abundant in other directions; this is also a work in which, during his whole career as a reformer, he methodically set down all the problems that were presented to his reflection, or that a deepening of his own thought led him to examine more closely. Whatever interest and value may attach to his other theological writings, the *Institutes* are the faithful summary of the ideas he expounded in them. Moreover, the *Institutes* – at least in their final form – purport to give a complete account of Christian teaching. They therefore present a synthesis of Calvinist thought, and one that is sufficient in itself; whereas to define the positions of a Luther or a Zwingli, one must have recourse to writings very different from one another.⁵

In this statement, Wendel explains the 'importance,' 'role,' and 'theological position' of the *Institutes* in relationship to Calvin's entire theology, but when interpreting this statement as being inter-connected to "union with Christ," which is one of Calvin's core thoughts, will it confer some theological meaning to us? Calvin's *Institutes* will be utilized as a theological barometer that can indicate that the "union with Christ" thought operates as a 'core thought' in his entire theology. It will also serve to prove that it illuminates the importance of the "union with Christ" thought and its biblical and theological roles.

In a practical manner, Calvin's "union with Christ" thought has been dealt with comprehensively in the *Institutes*, in which his theological thought is presented in condensed form. Additionally, the thought's comprehensiveness in the *Institutes* transcends the level at which it would be simply an 'aspect of the scope' of the book. In other words, the *comprehensiveness* of Calvin's "union with Christ" thought bestows more varied and

⁴ See Charles Partee, *The Theology of John Calvin* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2008), 4; Edward A. Dowey, Jr., "The Structure of Calvin's Thought as Influenced by the Twofold Knowledge of God," in *Calvinus Ecclesiae Genevensis Custos*, ed. Wilhelm H. Neuser (Bern: Peter Lang, 1984), 136-7; Mark D. Thompson, "Calvin on the Cross of Christ," in *John Calvin and Evangelical Theology: Legacy and Prospect*, ed. Sung Wook Chung (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009), 107-8.

⁵ François Wendel, *Calvin*, 111.

inclusive meaning.

4.1.1. The Comprehensiveness of Various Metaphorical Expressions of the “Union with Christ” Thought

Firstly, the *comprehensiveness* is borne out by various ‘metaphorical expressions.’ The thought recurs throughout his entire theology in the following representative metaphorical expressions: “We have been *grafted* in Christ” (Jn. 15:5; Ro. 11:17, 19); “we are *in Christ*” (1Co. 1:30; 2Co. 5:17; Php. 3:9; 1Jn. 5:20); “Christ is *in us*” (Jn. 6:56; 17:23, 26; Ro. 8:10; Eph. 4:17, Col. 1:27, 1 Jn. 3:24; 4:13); “Christ has *wedded* us to himself in truth” (2Co. 11:2); “Christ *dwells* in us” (Jn. 15:4; 17:23; 2 Co 13:5; Gal. 2:20; Eph. 3:17; 1 Jn. 3:24); “We *become one* with Christ (Jn. 17:23; Gal. 3:27); “*Christ partook* of our nature” (Jn. 17:23, 26); “*we partake* in Christ” (1Co. 10:16; Php. 3:8-11), “we *joined* to Christ” (Jn. 14:20; 15:5; 17:21-26; 1Co. 6:17), “Christ becomes *our Head*” (1 Co. 11:3; Eph. 4:15; 5:23); “We are *a member of Christ*” (1 Co. 6:15; 12:27; Eph. 5:30); “We *clothe* yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ” (Ro. 13:14; Gal. 3:27); “He had to become *ours*” (Ro 8:32); “We already *belonged to* the body of Christ” (1Co. 3:23; 2Co. 10:7; Gal. 3:29); “Christ is also *the root and seed of heavenly life in us*” (Jn. 6:51-58; Ro. 6:4-5); “Christ life *passes into us* and is made ours” (1 Jn. 5:11-12); “Christ made himself *one with his bride the church*” (Eph. 5:23); “Christ dwells in us only *through his Spirit*” (Jn. 14:17; 17:21, 23; Ro. 8:9; 1 Co. 3:16; 2 Ti. 2:14; Tit. 3:5-6; 1 Jn. 4:12-13, 15); “Christ *imparts to us his life*” (Ro. 8:9-11); “Not only does he cleave to us by an indivisible bond of fellowship, but with *a wonderful communion*” (1 Co. 1:9).

In addition, my analysis has found that Calvin’s “union with Christ” thought features in the implicit (or indirect) formulae, namely as ‘various metaphorical expressions’ which exceed at least 20 different words, a numerical result obtained from 20 different groups occurring only in the *Institutes*.⁶ In addition, the number results from having divided and sorted some similar conceptions into groups.

If we subdivide them, the number is increased to more than 150 different words as synonymous expressions. Furthermore, these do not occur only once, but recur repeatedly with small variations in the *Institutes*. In such instances, it is sure that the frequency of use

⁶ The various metaphorical expressions of the “union with Christ” thought which exceed at least 20 different words in the *Institutes* are not an analysis of the Latin, but the English version. The metaphorical expressions of the thought might be somewhat different in Latin, but probably not significantly so.

and the sorts of the metaphorical expressions occurring in vast quantity, become even more if we add together Calvin's entire theological works, namely his biblical commentaries, sermons, treatises, catechisms, letters, and so forth.

4.1.2. The Comprehensiveness of Various Theological Meanings of the "Union with Christ" Thought

Secondly, the *comprehensiveness* spans various theological meanings. Calvin's "union with Christ" thought contains core meanings, both theological and biblical, which on analysis were found to exceed more than 30 different sorts, namely: "mystical union;" "secret union;" "spiritual union;" "organic union;" "epistemological union;" "relational union;" "real union;" "substantial union;" "incomprehensible union;" "complete union;" "transcendental union;" "supernatural union;" "faith union;" "judicial union;" "union with Holy Spirit;" "Trinitarian union;" "vital union;" "sacramental union;" incarnational union; "essential union;" "union with Christ's human nature;" "union with Christ's two both human and divine natures;" "transformative union;" "creative union;" "union of office's commission;" "internal union;" "holy union;" union of *koinonia* (communion); "union of the whole personality;" "integrated union;" "the *communion* of the blood;" "effectual union;" "eschatological union;" and so forth. Thus most of the theological meanings of the "union with Christ" thought has been posited comprehensively through the 'implicit (or indirect) formula,' rather than the 'explicit (or direct) formula.'

4.1.3. The Volume of Work Contributes to the Comprehensiveness of the "Union with Christ" Thought

The volume of work further contributes to its *comprehensiveness*. Calvin's "union with Christ" thought also features extensively through the implicit (or indirect) formulae in his *Institutes*, biblical commentaries, sermons, treatises, catechisms, letters, and other theological works, besides almost the whole of the Old Testament; the Pentateuch, the poetical books, the prophetic books, both the major and minor prophets, as well as in almost the entire New Testament; the Gospels, the historical book and the Epistles (the Johannine, Pauline and the general letters).

In the *Institutes* in which Calvin's theological thought is condensed presents the

thought more frequently and comprehensively than any of his other theological works in terms of the number of pages from “Book One: The Knowledge of God the Creator” to “Book Four: The external means or Aids by Which God Invites Us into the Society of Christ and Holds us Therein.”

4.1.4. The Comprehensiveness of the Content of the “Union with Christ” Thought

The *comprehensiveness* of the content relates to the theological theme or meaning, although unfortunately relegated to being read only as a ‘doctrine,’ mostly in soteriology until now. Additionally, this ‘limitation of the content’s scope’ is found not only in the work of the conservative Calvinistic theologians, but also wider in Reformed theology.⁷

Regarding the research of Calvin’s theology, such a limitation of the content’s scope is a crucial theological weakness, and simultaneously, presents a theological task that demands urgently to be resolved, because the “union with Christ” thought exceeds the boundaries of soteriology and the sacraments. It is my assumption that the content can be examined extensively as having an implicit relation with almost every Christian doctrine in Calvin’s entire theology, and that Calvin dealt with it more comprehensively and intensively as having an inter-connection with many doctrines in the whole book of the *Institutes*.

For example, this interrelation emerges even when analyzed from a soteriological perspective. Up to the present, the Reformed Theology or Calvinistic theology has dealt with Calvin’s “union with Christ” thought mostly in the scope of the doctrine of justification and sanctification on a reduced scale, even in the soteriology of the *Institutes*, but my analysis has revealed that the “union with Christ” thought in Calvin’s *Institutes* is closely connected with the almost every doctrine or theological theme of soteriology, such as the following: The dominance of “union with Christ” in soteriology;⁸ predestination;⁹ election;¹⁰ atonement;¹¹ the resurrection;¹² reconciliation;¹³ calling;¹⁴ union by the Holy Spirit;¹⁵ regeneration;¹⁶

⁷ About this aspect, see Chapter 2: “The Theological Limitations and Causes of Calvin’s “Union with Christ” Thought in American Reformed Theology.”

⁸ *Institutes*, 3.1.2; 3.1.4; 3.2.24; 3.2.33.

⁹ *Institutes*, 3.1.1; 3.21.7; 3.22.6; 3.22.7; 3.23.14; 3.24.5.

¹⁰ *Institutes*, 3.24.1; 3.24.5.

¹¹ *Institutes*, 3.2.24; 3.11.9.

¹² *Institutes*, 3.25.3.

¹³ *Institutes*, 3.1.1; 3.2.30; 3.6.3; 3.11.1; 3.11.6; 3.14.6; 3.16.1.

¹⁴ *Institutes*, 3.6.2; 3.24.1; 3.24.2.

¹⁵ *Institutes*, 3.2.39; 3.11.5; 3.11.12; 3.14.9; 3.14.19; 3.17.5; 3.24.2.

faith;¹⁷ impartation of righteousness;¹⁸ repentance;¹⁹ justification;²⁰ sanctification;²¹ glorification;²² prayer;²³ eternal life;²⁴ the origin of salvation;²⁵ Trinitarian-structural union and soteriology;²⁶ new creation;²⁷ adoption;²⁸ covenant theology;²⁹ the relationship of the law and salvation;³⁰ the relationship of faith and deed;³¹ the relationship of faith and epistemology;³² faith is the result of the Holy Spirit's work of union;³³ forgiveness of sins;³⁴ the cross;³⁵ Christian freedom;³⁶ to disown one's self;³⁷ double grace (*duplex gratia*);³⁸ purity;³⁹ holiness;⁴⁰ growth together;⁴¹ the dominance of "union with Christ" to judicial justification;⁴² the final triumph;⁴³ communion with God;⁴⁴ communion with Christ;⁴⁵ the assurance of salvation;⁴⁶ conscience;⁴⁷ hope;⁴⁸ everlasting blessing;⁴⁹ and the doctrine of the

¹⁶ *Institutes*, 2.3.6; 2.14.19.

¹⁷ *Institutes*, 2.16.14; 3.1.4; 3.2.1; 3.2.8; 3.2.14; 3.2.24; 3.2.30; 3.2.33; 3.2.34; 3.2.35; 3.2.36; 3.2.39; 3.11.1; 3.11.7; 3.15.6; 3.16.1; 3.17.10; 3.17.11; 3.18.3; 4.6.10; 4.17.11; 4.17.13; 4.17.34.

¹⁸ *Institutes*, 3.11.3; 3.11.6; 3.11.10; 3.11.11; 3.11.23.

¹⁹ *Institutes*, 3.3.9; 3.3.20.

²⁰ *Institutes*, 3.11.1; 3.11.3; 3.11.5; 3.11.6; 3.11.7; 3.11.8; 3.11.9; 3.11.11; 3.11.12; 3.11.21; 3.11.23; 3.13.5; 3.15.5; 3.16.1; 3.17.10.

²¹ *Institutes*, 3.2.8; 3.2.24; 3.11.1; 3.11.12; 3.14.9; 3.17.6.

²² *Institutes*, 3.2.24.

²³ *Institutes*, 3.20.1; 3.20.19; 3.20.29; 3.20.36; 3.20.42.

²⁴ *Institutes*, 3.15.5; 3.22.7.

²⁵ *Institutes*, 2.3.6; 2.6.1; 3.2.35.

²⁶ *Institutes*, 1.13.15; 1.13.16; 1.13.24; 1.15.5; 1.15.6; 2.2.1; 2.3.7; 2.3.8; 2.3.10; 2.8.34; 2.8.51; 2.10.2; 2.10.7; 2.10.7; 2.10.8; 2.10.15; 2.8.23; 2.11.10; 2.11.11; 2.12.1; 2.12.6; 2.14.3; 2.15.4; 2.15.5; 2.16.3; 2.16.14; 2.16.16; 3.1.1; 3.1.2; 3.1.3; 3.2.1; 3.2.12; 3.2.33; 3.2.35; 3.2.39; 3.3.14; 3.6.2; 3.11.5; 3.11.8; 3.11.9; 3.11.12; 3.13.9; 3.14.6; 3.14.9; 3.14.18; 3.14.19; 3.17.5; 3.17.6; 3.18.3; 3.23.14; 3.24.1; 3.24.2; 3.25.2; 3.25.10; 4.1.2; 4.1.3; 4.1.20; 4.6.5; 4.14.16; 4.15.6; 4.17.10; 4.17.12; 4.17.18; 4.17.31; 4.17.33; 4.17.42.

²⁷ *Institutes*, 2.3.6; 2.11.12; 3.11.12; 3.17.5.

²⁸ *Institutes*, 2.6.1; 3.17.5; 3.17.6; 3.18.3; 3.24.1; 3.24.5.

²⁹ *Institutes*, 2.10.2; 2.10.8; 2.10.15; 3.14.6; 3.22.6.

³⁰ *Institutes*, 2.7.11; 2.8.13; 2.8.18; 2.8.29; 2.8.31; 2.8.34; 2.8.40; 2.8.51; 2.8.57; 3.17.6.

³¹ *Institutes*, 3.16.1; 3.17.10.

³² *Institutes*, 3.2.14.

³³ *Institutes*, 3.2.33; 3.2.34; 3.2.36; 3.2.39.

³⁴ *Institutes*, 3.11.6; 3.11.21; 3.17.10.

³⁵ *Institutes*, 3.8.7.

³⁶ *Institutes*, 3.19.12.

³⁷ *Institutes*, 3.7.3.

³⁸ *Institutes*, 3.11.1.

³⁹ *Institutes*, 3.14.9.

⁴⁰ *Institutes*, 3.16.1.

⁴¹ *Institutes*, 3.2.24.

⁴² *Institutes*, 3.2.33; 3.11.1; 3.11.5; 3.11.6; 3.11.8; 3.11.9; 3.11.10; 3.11.21; 3.11.23; 3.15.5; 3.16.1; 3.17.10.

⁴³ *Institutes*, 2.12.3; 3.13.5.

⁴⁴ *Institutes*, 3.18.3.

⁴⁵ *Institutes*, 3.1.1; 3.1.2; 3.2.24; 3.24.5.

⁴⁶ *Institutes*, 3.1.3; 3.13.5; 3.24.2.

⁴⁷ *Institutes*, 3.14.18.

⁴⁸ *Institutes*, 3.20.1.

⁴⁹ *Institutes*, 3.25.10.

Holy Spirit's work in soteriology.⁵⁰

Concerning the aspect of contents, we briefly investigated the comprehensiveness of Calvin's "union with Christ" thought only in soteriology. In spite of all this, what does it mean that Calvin's "union with Christ" thought has been dealt with as maintaining the close inter-connection of those various doctrines and the various theological themes, even only in soteriology? It means that the comprehensiveness of content relates to Calvin's "union with Christ" thought in his entire theology.

In fact, the *Institutes* provide a good example of the 'comprehensiveness of content' of Calvin's "union with Christ" thought. The 'comprehensive content' has been shown to have interconnection with almost every Christian doctrine, from the doctrine of creation to eschatology and through various theological themes. Furthermore, regarding the 'theological-structural aspect' and also the aspect of frequency of use, Calvin's "union with Christ" thought has extensively been dealt with by implicit (or indirect) formulae, throughout the *Institutes*.

In summary, the comprehensiveness of the "union with Christ" thought reveals several theological meanings. First of all, it verifies that the thought features as a 'core thought' or a 'theological methodology' in Calvin's theology, having been connected in terms of both structure and content of the whole book of the *Institutes*.

The comprehensiveness of the "union with Christ" thought also has practical theological influence, which is extended not only to the theological aspect, but also to the social, religious, philosophical, and cultural aspects.⁵¹ The reason is that Calvin's reformational influence had been advanced inclusively, so that Calvin is seen as the theologian,⁵² minister,⁵³ first modern biblical scholar,⁵⁴ author,⁵⁵ commentator,⁵⁶ Reformer,⁵⁷

⁵⁰ *Institutes*, 1.7.1; 1.7.2; 1.7.3; 1.7.4; 1.7.5; 1.8.13; 1.13.14; 2.12.1; 2.12.2; 2.2.16; 2.3.6; 2.3.8; 2.5.15; 3.1.1; 3.1.2; 3.1.3; 3.1.4; 3.2.8; 3.2.12; 3.2.24; 3.2.33; 3.2.34; 3.2.35; 3.2.36; 3.2.39; 3.3.3; 3.3.4; 3.3.5; 3.11.12; 4.14.9, 4.14.9, 4.14.16; 4.15.6; 4.15.5; 4.15.6, 4.17.1, 4.17.10; 4.17.11, 4.17.12; 4.17.18; 4.17.31; 4.17.33.

⁵¹ Herman J. Selderhuis, "Calvin Images: Images and Self-Image," in *The Calvin Handbook*, ed. Herman J. Selderhuis, trans. Judith J. Guder Henry J. Baron, Randi H. Lundell, and Gerrit W. Sheeres (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 1-7.

⁵² W. Robert Godfrey, "The Counselor to the Afflicted," in *John Calvin: A Heart for Devotion Doctrine & Doxology*, ed. Burk Parsons (Lake Mary, FL: Reformation Trust Publishing, 2008), 83.

⁵³ Robert M. Kingdon, "Calvin and Church Discipline," in *John Calvin Rediscovered: The Impact of His Social and Economic Thought*, ed. Edward Dommen and James D. Bratt (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2007), 25.

⁵⁴ Raymond A. Blacketer, "Commentaries and Prefaces," in *The Calvin Handbook*, ed. Herman J. Selderhuis, trans. Judith J. Guder, Henry J. Baron, Randi H. Lundell, and Gerrit W. Sheeres (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 181.

⁵⁵ Paul Fields, "Calvin's Works—Old and New," in *The Calvin Handbook*, ed. Herman J. Selderhuis, trans. Judith J. Guder, Henry J. Baron, Randi H. Lundell, and Gerrit W. Sheeres (Grand Rapids, Michigan:

Christian Humanist,⁵⁸ great preacher,⁵⁹ hero of faith,⁶⁰ one of the best professors of God,⁶¹ and so forth. These various titles point to Calvin's practical influence in multifarious fields.

Simultaneously Calvin has also been considered to be a biblical-centric thinker;⁶² systematic-logical thinker;⁶³ church-centric thinker;⁶⁴ theologian of the Holy Spirit;⁶⁵ the Father of the Reformed Theology,⁶⁶ thus attesting to his wide and versatile influence. Additionally, all Calvin's practical influences can be retraced to the core thought of the "union with Christ."

Calvin's point of departure was not a static theology of speculation, ideology, abstraction, subjectivity, or philosophy but he pursued both static and dynamic theology at the same time as 'theology and life (belief),' 'theory and practice (application),' 'faith and action (deed),' 'the Scriptures and dogma,' and 'epistemological theology and practical theology.' Therefore, his theology is strongly integrated, coherent, relational (or connective), practical, all-inclusive and comprehensive. At the centre is the "union with Christ" as his core thought which makes such a theology possible. In a practical manner, his "union with Christ" thought acts as the power source for his theological methodological principle and biblical

William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 8.

⁵⁶ Phillip R. Johnson, "The Writer for the People of God," in *John Calvin: A Heart for Devotion Doctrine & Doxology*, ed. Burk Parsons (Lake Mary, FL: Reformation Trust Publishing, 2008), 95; John L. Thompson, "Calvin as a Biblical Interpreter," in *John Calvin*, ed. Donald K. McKim (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 58-73.

⁵⁷ William Edgar, "Ethics: The Christian Life and Good Works According to Calvin: Institutes 3.6-10, 17-19," in *Theological Guide to Calvin's Institutes: Essays and Analysis*, ed. David W. Hall and Peter A. Lillback (Phillipsburg, New Jersey: P&R Publishing, 2008), 321.

⁵⁸ John W de Gruchy, *John Calvin: Christian Humanist & Evangelical Reformer* (Wellington: Lux Verbi.BM, 2009); Richard C. Gamble, "Calvin's Theological Method: Word and Spirit, A Case Study," in *The Organizational Structure of Calvin's Theology: Volume 7*, ed. Richard C. Gamble (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc, 1992), 61.

⁵⁹ Steven J. Lawson, "The Preacher of God's Word," in *John Calvin: A Heart for Devotion Doctrine & Doxology*, ed. Burk Parsons (Lake Mary, FL: Reformation Trust Publishing, 2008), 82; Wim Moehn, "Sermons," in *The Calvin Handbook*, ed. Herman J. Selderhuis, trans. Judith J. Guder Henry J. Baron, Randi H. Lundell, and Gerrit W. Sheeres (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 173.

⁶⁰ Herman J. Selderhuis, "Calvin Images: Images and Self-Image," 1-7.

⁶¹ Charles Partee, *The Theology of John Calvin*, 298.

⁶² James Grier, "Philosophical Calvinism," in *Living for God's Glory: An Introduction to Calvinism*, ed. Joel R. Beeke (Lake Mary, FL: Reformation Trust Publishing, 2008), 150.

⁶³ Joel R. Beeke, "Appropriating Salvation: The Spirit, Faith and Assurance (3.1-3, 6-10)," in *Theological Guide To Calvin's Institutes: Essays and Analysis*, ed. David W. Hall and Peter A. Lillback (Phillipsburg, New Jersey: P&R Publishing, 2008), 270-1.

⁶⁴ Herman J. Selderhuis, "Calvin Images: Images and Self-Image," 1-7.

⁶⁵ Elias Dantas, "Calvin, the Theologian of the Holy Spirit," in *John Calvin and Evangelical Theology: Legacy and Prospect*, ed. Sung Wook Chung (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009), 128-9; David Clyde Jones, "The Law and the Spirit of Christ (2.6-9)," in *Theological Guide To Calvin's Institutes: Essays and Analysis*, ed. David W. Hall and Peter A. Lillback (Phillipsburg, New Jersey: P&R Publishing, 2008), 301.

⁶⁶ Jerry Bridges, "The True Christian Life," in *John Calvin: A Heart for Devotion Doctrine & Doxology*, ed. Burk Parsons (Lake Mary, FL: Reformation Trust Publishing, 2008), 221.

evidence.

Unfortunately the value of his “union with Christ” thought seems to be hidden deeply, as in a parable of Jesus in the Gospel about “treasure hidden in a field” (Mt. 13:44). The reason is that although it has been considered by Reformed theologians only in its doctrinal implications, Calvin dealt with it inclusively and extensively as a thought, a theological principle, and theological methodology, including the doctrinal aspect. As a result, it is a pity that even though Reformed theology inherited Calvin’s theological legacy, “union with Christ” is absent or understood insufficiently as an epistemological phenomenon.

In Part Two, therefore, we will deal extensively with the meanings and features of Calvin’s “union with Christ” thought as at the heart of the whole of the *Institutes*, as the main theme of this dissertation. I will deal with the essential features of the “union with Christ” thought in Calvin’s entire book of the *Institutes*, but in some circumstances, his biblical commentaries, sermons, treatises, catechisms, letters, and other theological works will also be quoted. In fact, Calvin’s theological works other than the *Institutes* feature more prominently in Chapter Five.

Chapter Four will focus on ‘the metaphorical expressions of the various notions’ in more detail, as a representative feature of the “union with Christ” thought. In Chapter Five we will observe ‘the features of the essential theological meaning.’ As a result, the “union with Christ” thought’s importance and worth, which has been dealt with comprehensively in Calvin’s theology by the various theological expression of the formula and the implicit (or indirect) formulae will be illuminated through the research.

4.2. Features of Calvin’s “Union with Christ” Thought: The Various Metaphorical Expressions

Has the “union with Christ” thought been dealt with comprehensively as having played a role as a ‘core thought’ in Calvin’s entire theology? To answer this question, and also to re-evaluate the significance and true value of the thought, we must analyze its essential features. As mentioned, the “union with Christ” thought has been comprehensively treated by implicit (or indirect) formulae in Calvin’s entire theology, recurring in various metaphorical expressions of more than 150 different words.

The multifarious synonymous expressions are similarly inter-connected to the ‘various doctrines’ or theological themes. For this reason, each expression contains various

theological meanings, so that the “union with Christ” thought is divided again into the metaphorical expressions of ‘various notions,’ such as: Relational (or connective) notions; union and unitive notions; other more direct biblical notions; socio-cultural notions; Pneumatological-mystical notions; real or substantial notions; effectual notions; communality notions; and eschatological notions. In this chapter, we will examine various metaphorical expressions for Calvin’s “union with Christ” thought in detail and observe the significance of the thought by focusing on its essential features and theological meanings.

4.2.1. Metaphorical Expressions of Relational Notions

The meaning of “union with Christ” includes ‘the intimate relationship’ (1Co. 1:9, 2Co. 13:13) between Christ or the Trinitarian God and us. However, this relationship transcends the parameters of distance and space, and advances to the status of being united as one by the work of the Holy Spirit. Calvin expressed this very close relationship as “we become *one* with Christ” by various metaphorical formulations.

Although Calvin was never satisfied merely to explain the intimate relational aspect between believers and Christ through “union with Christ,” he rather interpreted the Gospel by various close ‘relational notions’ and ‘relational parables’ of the “union with Christ” thought, and also explained its doctrinal and theological meanings in the Holy Scriptures. This aspect is just one of the reasons that “union with Christ” permeates his theology and also acts as a ‘core thought.’ We will now examine the sort of ‘relational metaphorical notions’ and their theological meanings for Calvin’s “union with Christ” thought.

4.2.1.1. Communion with Christ

Calvin explained “union with Christ” by using metaphorical expressions for the ‘relational notion’ in his theology, such as “*communion* with Christ,”⁶⁷ “*fellowship* with Christ,”⁶⁸ and “*communication* with Christ.”⁶⁹ Such expressions as “communion” imply “an indivisible bond of *fellowship*,”⁷⁰ “a wonderful *communion*,”⁷¹ “sure *communion*,”⁷² “an

⁶⁷ *Institutes*, 2.10.8; 3.1.1; 3.2.24; 3.3.23; 3.6.2; 3.14.4; 3.18.3; 3.24.5; 4.16.7; 4.16.17; 4.17.7; 4.17.8; 4.17.13.

⁶⁸ *Institutes*, 3.1.2; 3.2.24; 3.11.10; 3.17.6; 4.1.3; 4.15.6; 4.16.2; 4.16.7; 4.17.9.

⁶⁹ *Institutes*, 4.14.7. *Comm.* on Ro. 6:7; *Comm.* on Php.3:10, *Comm.* on 1 Pe. 4:1.

⁷⁰ *Institutes*, 3.2.24.

⁷¹ *Institutes*, 3.2.24.

⁷² *Institutes*, 3.24.5.

integral *communion*,”⁷³ “life-giving *communion*,”⁷⁴ “a living *communication*,”⁷⁵ and “intimate *fellowship*.”⁷⁶ Calvin emphasized that the reality of ‘communion between believers and Christ,’ which is implied by “union with Christ” falls within the category of the relational metaphor as “communion” that is indivisible, perfect and dynamic.

Calvin referred to “communion” extensively to interpret and explain his many theological themes by various metaphorical expressions. This becomes clear when we look at the following statement, in which Wilhelm Niesel explained the necessity and importance of the inclusive research of Calvin’s theology, interpreting W. Kolffhaus’ theological view:

Preferably, W. Kolffhaus’ theological view has to be mentioned. He devoted his life to the study of Calvin, and endeavored to grasp Calvin’s profound internal meanings. *Die Christusgemeinschaft bei Johannes Calvin (John Calvin’s communion with Christ)*, which was completed in his later years and was the mature fruition of his extensive research is a classic text in Calvin research. The theme is not only Calvin’s doctrine, but is related to the crucial theological programme of the communion with the Lord, and Christ!⁷⁷ (my parenthesis)

In this statement Niesel emphasizes the importance of Kolffhaus’ extensive research, in which Kolffhaus emphasizes that “communion with Christ” has played an important role in Calvin’s theology. It is not much different from statements proving that Calvin’s metaphorical notions for “communion with Christ” resurface in his theology. This will become clearer from the following citation, in which Calvin emphasizes his sacramental statement:

Moreover, I am not satisfied with those persons who, recognizing that we have some communion with Christ, when they would show that it is, make us partakers of the Spirit only, omitting mention of flesh and blood...*Therefore, it is certain that an integral communion of Christ reaches beyond their too narrow description of it*, I shall proceed to deal with it briefly, in so far as it is clear and manifest, before I discuss the contrary fault of excess⁷⁸ (own emphasis).

In a similar way, Calvin himself criticized a limited understanding of the

⁷³ *Institutes*, 4.17.6.

⁷⁴ *Institutes*, 4.17.8.

⁷⁵ *Comm.* on Ro. 6:7.

⁷⁶ *Institutes*, 4.17.9.

⁷⁷ Wilhelm Niesel, *Die Theologie Calvins* (München, Germany: Chr. Kaiser Verlag München, 1957), 18-19.

⁷⁸ *Institutes*, 4.17.7.

metaphorical expressions of “communion with Christ,” and demanded of us as believers to “reach beyond our too narrow description” regarding the “integral communion of Christ.” This invites us to explore a wider array of metaphorical expressions and seek for their deeper theological meanings. Calvin himself understood the notion of “communion with Christ” as having an inter-connection with various theological themes.

Calvin explained the doctrine of the Holy Spirit’s work, the relationship between the Triune God and us, the relationship with faith, repentance, the impartation of righteousness, sanctification, the promise of grace, eternal life, predestination, the doctrine of the sacrament, baptism, the Eucharist, and ecclesiology in detail by metaphorical expressions for “union with Christ” associated with the notion of “communion.”⁷⁹

4.2.1.2. Participation in Christ

Another ‘relational metaphorical expression’ for Calvin’s “union with Christ” thought is the notion of “*participation* with Christ” (1Co. 10:16). This may be explained in two directions; “Christ *partook* of our nature,”⁸⁰ and the opposite direction, “we *partake* in Christ.”⁸¹ These two directions of the metaphorical expression “participation” present an essential feature of the “union with Christ” thought, like twins. The two directions - as ‘Christ in believers’ (Gal. 2:20) and ‘believers in Christ’ (Jn. 17:21), exist fundamentally in the “union with Christ” thought. In short, the notion of mutual ‘completeness of union’⁸² between Christ and believers is basically included in “union with Christ.”

Nevertheless, these two directions of “participation” as a metaphorical expression for Calvin’s “union with Christ” do not have different meanings from the fundamental viewpoint, because, even the one direction of “participation,” namely “we partake in Christ,” eventually means that “Christ makes us participants in himself.”⁸³ In other words, it is the fundamental theological notion that the ‘initiative of union’ always belongs to Christ and it is at work profoundly in the “union with Christ” thought, even though two directions as ‘mutual

⁷⁹ *Institutes*, 2.10.8; 3.1.1; 3.1.2; 3.2.24; 3.3.23; 3.6.2; 3.11.10; 3.14.4; 3.17.6; 3.18.3; 3.24.5; 4.1.3; 4.14.7; 4.15.6; 4.16.2; 4.16.7; 4.16.17; 4.17.7; 4.17.8; 4.14.9; 4.17.13.

⁸⁰ *Comm.* on Eph. 5:30.

⁸¹ *Institutes*, 2.10.2; 2.10.7; 2.16.7; 3.2.24; 3.3.9; 3.3.23; 3.11.8; 3.11.9; 3.11.23; 3.14.4; 3.15.6; 3.16.1; 3.17.11; 4.1.2; 4.14.16; 4.15.6; 4.17.1; 4.17.4; 4.17.5; 4.17.8; 4.17.9; 4.17.10; 4.17.11; 4.17.12; 4.17.14; 4.17.18; 4.17.19; 4.17.20; 4.17.26; 4.17.29; 4.17.33; 4.17.38; 4.18.8; 4.18.10; 4.19.3.

⁸² *Institutes*, 3.1.1; 3.2.24; 3.17.15.

⁸³ *Institutes*, 3.2.24.

union' between Christ and believers exist in the thought.⁸⁴

Calvin mentions various relational expressions that clearly imply the essential features of "real *participation* in God;"⁸⁵ "our *participation* in Christ's death;"⁸⁶ "*participation* in Christ himself;"⁸⁷ "*participation* in Christ's righteousness;"⁸⁸ "*participation* in Christ's life;"⁸⁹ "*participation* in Christ's sanctification;"⁹⁰ "to *partake* of Christ's flesh and blood;"⁹¹ "*participation* in Christ's divine immortality;"⁹² "we having been made *partakers* of Christ's substance;"⁹³ "*partaking* in all of Christ's benefits;"⁹⁴ and "the true and substantial *participation* in Christ;"⁹⁵ and has emphasized its importance.

If seen from this point of view, the relational metaphorical expression, "we *partake* in Christ" grants a very important theological meaning that as believers, we are practically able to partake in almost every aspect of Christ. In other words, through "union with Christ" as real and mystical "participation," our Christian's identity will be newly illuminated as the status of 'the one who received a commission of the three offices of Christ.' At the same time, it will bestow the powerful biblical and logical foundations which allow us to re-interpret our various theological themes and doctrines.⁹⁶

Even if we examine the relational metaphorical expressions "we partake in Christ" only in the *Institutes*, we recognize that it relates to various theological themes. In detail, Calvin provides relational metaphorical expressions such as "participation" to connect various theological themes, such as: The Word; eternal life (or life); atonement (or Christ's redemptive death); soteriology; repentance; the doctrine of the Holy Spirit's work (or Pneumatology); justification; union with Triune God; eschatology; holiness; faith; calling; the

⁸⁴ *Institutes*, 4.17.31. For Calvin's it is a biblical and theological fundamental notion that the 'initiative of union' always belongs to the Triune God. Cf. the discussion of the theological meanings of the thought in Chapter Five.

⁸⁵ *Institutes*, 2.10.7.

⁸⁶ *Institutes*, 2.16.7.

⁸⁷ *Institutes*, 3.2.24; 4.17.11.

⁸⁸ *Institutes*, 3.11.23; 3.14.4; 3.17.11.

⁸⁹ *Institutes*, 3.15.5; 3.15.6; 4.17.8.

⁹⁰ *Institutes*, 3.16.1.

⁹¹ *Institutes*, 4.17.1; 4.17.5; 4.17.8; 4.17.9; 4.17.10; 4.17.12; 4.17.18; 4.17.19; 4.17.20; 4.17.22; 4.17.26; 4.17.32; 4.17.33; 4.17.38; 4.18.10; 4.19.3.

⁹² *Institutes*, 4.17.4.

⁹³ *Institutes*, 4.17.11; 4.17.34; *Comm. on Eph.* 5:30.

⁹⁴ *Institutes*, 4.17.11.

⁹⁵ *Institutes*, 4.17.11; 4.17.19; 4.18.8.

⁹⁶ For the comprehensiveness and importance of Calvin's "union with Christ" thought's with reference to "participation," see the following books: Charles Partee, *Calvin and Classical Philosophy* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1977), 112-5; J. Todd Billings, *Calvin, Participation, and the Gift: The Activity of Believers in Union with Christ* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 15-6, 23, 94, 98, 101; Guenther H. Haas, "Calvin's Ethics," in *John Calvin*, ed. Donald K. McKim (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 95.

Eucharist; grace; and the resurrection.⁹⁷

From this point of view, what does such an individual theme as “participation,” which is the relational metaphorical expression of Calvin’s “union with Christ,” say to us? It has provided ample evidence that the “union with Christ” thought acts as a ‘core thought’ in Calvin’s theology.

4.2.1.3. Christ Joins Us with Him

The relational phrase “Christ joins us with Him” (1Co. 6:17) is one of the important metaphorical expressions of Calvin’s “union with Christ” thought. He alternates that thought with relational metaphorical expressions⁹⁸ such as “*bound* to Christ, or Christ has *bound* himself to us,”⁹⁹ or “*cleave* to Christ, or Christ *joins* us with him.”¹⁰⁰ In these expressions “join” assumes significance matching the core thought.

Similar to “communion,” the metaphorical expression “join” in relation to the “union with Christ” thought also indicates the intimate relational aspect between us as believers and Christ, meaning that Christ and we are ‘bound as one’ by the Holy Spirit; there is never any spatial distance. Calvin mentions the “union with Christ” thought as “joining,” as in “*joined* to God’s eternity,”¹⁰¹ “fully and firmly *joined* with God,”¹⁰² “Christ has *bound* himself to us,”¹⁰³ “we are *joined* with Christ’s flesh,”¹⁰⁴ and “Christ’s reality *joined* with us”¹⁰⁵ to emphasize the importance, reality, dynamic, and perfection of “union with Christ,” a ‘core thought’ of the Scriptures, through the relational metaphorical expression “join.”

Calvin also involves various theological themes in the category of “joining” in the *Institutes*, Calvin explains the inter-connectedness with various theological themes, such as: the law; the Word; the knowledge of God; Christ as the Mediator; Christ’s reign; promise; eternal life; soteriology; reconciliation; union with Triune God; ecclesiology; the doctrine of

⁹⁷ *Institutes*, 2.10.2; 2.10.7; 2.16.7; 3.3.23; 3.2.24; 3.3.9; 3.11.8; 3.11.9; 3.14.4; 3.15.6; 3.16.1; 3.17.11; 4.1.2; 4.14.16; 4.17.1; 4.17.4; 4.17.5; 4.17.8; 4.17.9; 4.17.10; 4.17.11; 4.17.12; 4.17.14; 4.17.18; 4.17.19; 4.17.20; 4.17.22; 4.17.26; 4.17.29; 4.17.32; 4.17.33; 4.17.34; 4.17.38; 4.18.8; 4.18.10; 4.19.3.

⁹⁸ Moreover, for the importance of the metaphorical expressions “join” of the “union with Christ” thought, see Wilhelm Kolffhaus, *Christusgemeinschaft bei Johannes Calvin*, Beiträge zur Geschichte und Lehre der Reformierten Kirche, Vol. 3 (Neukirchen: Buchhandlung d. Erziehungsvereins, 1938), 80.

⁹⁹ *Institutes*, 2.10.7; 2.12.1; 3.1.1; 3.2.24; 4.1.20; 4.17.33; 4.17.44.

¹⁰⁰ *Institutes*, 2.8.51; 2.10.2; 2.10.7; 2.10.15; 2.11.11; 2.12.1; 2.14.3; 2.15.4; 2.16.3; 3.2.24; 3.6.2; 3.7.3; 3.11.8; 3.11.10; 3.11.21; 3.15.6; 3.21.7; 4.6.10; 4.17.6; 4.17.9; 4.17.12; 4.17.13; 4.17.21; 4.17.24; 4.17.28; 4.17.31; 4.17.33; 4.17.34; *Comm.* on 1 Co. 3:11; *Comm.* on 1 Pe. 2:23.

¹⁰¹ *Institutes*, 2.10.15.

¹⁰² *Institutes*, 2.12.1; 2.16.3; 4.17.33.

¹⁰³ *Institutes*, 3.2.24; 3.21.7.

¹⁰⁴ *Institutes*, 4.17.9; 4.17.44; 4.17.45.

¹⁰⁵ *Institutes*, 4.17.21.

the Holy Spirit's work (or Pneumatology); glorification; calling; holy; justification; election; the Kingdom of God; eschatology; the forgiveness of sins; faith; acceptance; and the Eucharist.¹⁰⁶

Similarly, "join" is implied in such metaphorical notions as the following: "We abide in him and *he in us*, because he has given us of his Spirit" (1Jn. 4:13); "Christ is *near us*" and "the Son of God to become for us 'Immanuel, that is, *God with us*'" (Isa. 7:14; Mt. 1:23).¹⁰⁷

To sum up, this imputes various theological meanings to the following roles: it verifies that "union with Christ" functions as a central 'theological principle' in Calvin's theology. It also emphasizes the crucial and true 'theological value' of the repeated and continuous occurrence of the thought. In a practical sense it becomes a guide to show and corroborate our Christian identity, status, office, role, and even eschatological destiny.

4.2.2. Metaphorical Expressions of Union and Unitive Notions

Seen narrowly, the 'relational notions' are already contained in the meanings of the "union with Christ" thought, but from the wider perspective the thought transcends the category of such a 'relational notion,' to include the aspects of content, structure, scope, and practice of not only 'doctrine,' but also as a central 'theological principle.'

The other important aspect is the 'unitive (or union) notion,' which Calvin explains as an essential feature of the "union with Christ" thought, both biblically and theologically.' He demonstrates the important theological themes and doctrines of Christianity in his theology by the 'unitive notion' of the thought in a biblical and comprehensive way. From such a point of view, Calvin's great contribution is that he reveals the value of the "union with Christ" thought, which has been treated extensively through the 'implicit (or indirect) formula' in his theology and the Scriptures, but nevertheless, has been muted in importance, like a "treasure hidden in a field" (Mt. 13:44), by the 'unitive metaphorical expressions.'

Regarding the 'metaphorical expressions of unitive notions' of the "union with Christ" thought, its essential features include the following notional forms: transcendental

¹⁰⁶ *Institutes*, 2.8.51; 2.10.2; 2.10.7; 2.10.15; 2.11.11; 2.12.1; 2.12.7; 2.14.3; 2.15.4; 2.16.3; 3.1.1; 3.1.3; 3.2.24; 3.6.2; 3.7.3; 3.11.21; 3.15.6; 3.21.7; 4.1.20; 4.6.10; 4.12.24; 4.17.6; 4.17.9; 4.17.10; 4.17.13; 4.17.24; 4.17.28; 4.17.31; 4.17.33; 4.17.34; 4.19.36.

¹⁰⁷ *Institutes*, 2.12.1; 3.1.4; 3.2.39; 3.11.5; 3.11.12; 3.14.8; 4.6.10; 4.8.11; 4.17.5; 4.17.18; 4.17.26; 4.17.28; 4.17.30; 4.17.42.

(incomprehensible);¹⁰⁸ mystical;¹⁰⁹ spiritual;¹¹⁰ real;¹¹¹ substantial;¹¹² essential;¹¹³ organic;¹¹⁴ ontological;¹¹⁵ and the whole personality.¹¹⁶ Of course, almost every metaphor pertaining to an ‘unitive notion’ of the “union with Christ” and its ‘relational notions’ also duplicate meanings between them. I will now attempt to examine this metaphorical aspect, and illuminate its importance and essential theological meanings.

4.2.2.1. We Become one with Christ

One representative ‘unitive notion’ of the “union with Christ” thought is a mystical and transcendental metaphorical expression how we become “*one* with Christ,”¹¹⁷ (Jn. 17:23; Gal. 3:27) or “*one body* with Christ”¹¹⁸ (Eph. 4:15-16). These metaphorical expressions of ‘unitive notion’ such as “become one” and “become one body” do not differ essentially in meaning. In fact, Calvin himself frequently uses these unitive metaphorical expressions in

¹⁰⁸ *Institutes*, 2.12.7; 3.1.1; 3.1.24; 3.11.5; 4.17.1; 4.17.9; 4.17.31; 4.17.33; 4.19.35; Comm. Eph. 5:32; Randall C. Zachman, “*Communio cum Christo*,” in *The Calvin Handbook*, ed. Herman J. Selderhuis, trans. Judith J. Guder, Henry J. Baron, Randi H. Lundell, and Gerrit W. Sheeres (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 367.

¹⁰⁹ *Institutes*, 2.2.16; 2.3.1; 2.3.6; 2.12.7; 3.1.1; 3.1.3; 3.11.5; 3.11.9; 3.11.10; 4.17.1; 4.17.3; 4.17.5; 4.17.7; 4.17.8; 4.17.9; 4.17.10; 4.17.11; William A. Mueller, “The Mystical Union,” in *Basic Christian Doctrines: Contemporary Evangelical Thought*, ed. Carl F. H. Henry (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1975), 206-19.

¹¹⁰ *Institutes*, 2.9.3; 2.12.7; 2.13.2; 2.16.14; 3.1.1; 3.1.2; 3.1.4; 3.2.1; 3.2.8; 3.2.12; 3.2.33; 3.2.34; 3.2.35; 3.2.36; 3.2.39; 3.11.5; 3.11.12; 3.14.9; 3.14.19; 3.17.5; 4.1.2; 4.14.16; 4.15.6; 4.17.8; 4.17.10; 4.17.12; 4.17.15; 4.17.16; 4.17.20; 4.17.26; 4.17.28; 4.17.31; 4.17.32; 4.17.33; 4.17.34; Thabit Anyabwile, “The Transforming Work of the Spirit,” in *John Calvin: A Heart for Devotion Doctrine & Doxology*, ed. Burk Parsons (Lake Mary, FL: Reformation Trust Publishing, 2008), 119-28.

¹¹¹ *Institutes*, 4.17.4; 4.17.5; 4.17.6; 4.17.9; 4.17.10; 4.17.11; 4.17.15; 4.17.16; 4.17.19; 4.17.21; 4.17.33; Wim Janse, “The Sacraments,” in *The Calvin Handbook*, ed. Herman J. Selderhuis, trans. Judith J. Guder, Henry J. Baron, Randi H. Lundell, and Gerrit W. Sheeres (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 352-3.

¹¹² *Institutes*, 3.11.10; 4.17.4; 4.17.5; 4.17.6; 4.17.9; 4.17.10; 4.17.11; 4.17.21; 4.17.34; John D. Nicholls, “Union with Christ: John Calvin on the Lord’s Supper,” in *Union and Communion 1529-1979*, ed. The Westminster Conference (London: The Westminster Conference, 1979), 37.

¹¹³ *Institutes*, 1.1.3; 1.5.6; 2.12.6; 2.13.2; 3.1.4; 3.2.35; 3.11.5; 3.11.6; 3.11.9; 3.11.11; 3.11.12; 3.13.5; 3.24.2; 4.15.6; 4.17.4; 4.17.5; 4.17.6; 4.17.8; 4.17.9; 4.17.11; 4.17.12; 4.17.13; 4.17.15; 4.17.16; 4.17.18; 4.17.21; J. Todd Billings, “John Calvin: United to God through Christ,” in *Partakers of the Divine Nature: The History and Development of Deification in the Christian Traditions*, ed. Michael J. Christensen and Jeffery A. Wittung (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2007), 212.

¹¹⁴ Michael S. Horton, *Lord and Servant* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005), 231.

¹¹⁵ *Institutes*, 3.1.4; 3.2.35; 3.2.39; 4.17.4; 4.17.5; 4.17.6; 4.17.10; Lewis B. Smedes, *All Things Made New: A Theology of Man’s Union with Christ* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1970), 7.

¹¹⁶ Charles Partee, “Calvin’s Central Dogma Again,” in *The Organizational Structure of Calvin’s Theology: Volume 7*, ed. Richard C. Gamble (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc, 1992), 82; Robert Letham, *Union with Christ*, 105-6.

¹¹⁷ *Institutes*, 2.12.7; 2.13.1; 3.1.2; 3.1.3; 3.2.24; 3.11.5; 3.11.10; 3.17.11; 3.18.3; 3.25.10; 4.17.10; 4.17.20; 4.17.38; 4.18.10; 4.19.35.

¹¹⁸ *Institutes*, 3.1.1; 3.2.24; 3.16.12; 4.14.7; 4.15.15; 4.17.2; 4.17.11; 4.17.12; 4.17.14; 4.17.38; 4.19.35.

varied ways with the same words, as ‘Christ becomes “one” or “one body” with us by the Holy Spirit,’ in his theology:

But since Christ has been so imparted to you with all his benefits that all his things are made yours, that you are made a member of him, indeed *one with him*... Not only does he cleave to us by an indivisible bond of fellowship, but with a wonderful communion, day by day, he grows more and more into *one body with us*, until he becomes completely *one with us*¹¹⁹ (own emphasis).

And there is no need of this for us to enjoy a participation in it, since the Lord bestows this benefit upon us through his Spirit so that *we may be made one in body, spirit, and soul with him*. The bond of this connection is therefore the Spirit of Christ, *with whom we are joined in unity*, and is like a channel through which all that Christ himself is and has is conveyed to us¹²⁰ (own emphasis).

On the other hand, ‘unitive metaphorical expressions’ such as “become one” has two directions, the same as “participation” among the ‘relational metaphorical expressions.’ One direction is to read this as “Christ is *one* with us”¹²¹ (Jn. 15:4), and the other one is in the opposite direction, “we are *one* with Christ”¹²² (Jn. 15:4; Eph. 4:15-16). The two directions of the metaphorical expressions of “becoming one” have the same essential characteristics as “union with Christ,” which has been explained when discussing the notion of “participation.”

In other words, the two directions of “union,” namely ‘Christ in believers’ and ‘believers in Christ’ existed fundamentally in the “union with Christ” thought. Calvin has repeatedly emphasized the crucial meaning that exists in the ‘mutual union’ between Christ and believers through the mystical and transcendental expressions of a ‘unitive metaphor’ in his theology. Seen from such a point of view, those thoughts of “becoming one” between Christ and believers are similar to the expression of the relational parable as “participation.” The unitive notion that “Christ becomes one with us” provides important logical evidence to re-interpret both our ‘commission as the three offices of Christ,’ and the ‘existence of the Kingdom of God in the present time.’

In great detail Calvin emphasizes the importance of the “union with Christ” thought through such unitive metaphorical expressions as the following: “He is made *completely one*

¹¹⁹ *Institutes*, 3.2.24.

¹²⁰ *Institutes*, 4.17.12.

¹²¹ *Institutes*, 3.1.1; 3.1.2; 3.2.24; 3.11.5; 4.17.10; 4.18.10; 4.19.35.

¹²² *Institutes*, 2.12.7; 2.13.1; 3.1.1; 3.1.3; 3.2.24; 3.11.5; 3.11.10; 3.16.2; 3.17.11; 3.18.3; 3.25.10; 4.14.7; 4.15.15; 4.17.2; 4.17.11; 4.17.12; 4.17.14; 4.17.20; 4.17.38.

with us;”¹²³ “we grow into *one body* with Christ;”¹²⁴ “We may be made *one* in body, spirit, and soul with Christ;”¹²⁵ “we are made *one* with God;”¹²⁶ “Christ made himself *one* with his bride the church;”¹²⁷ and “*one* flesh with Christ.”¹²⁸ Through repeated reference to the ‘mystical and transcendental union between Christ and believers’ which allows us, through ‘the work of the Holy Spirit of God’ to become one,¹²⁹ we arrive at the fundamental notion that always begins from the root: “union by the Holy Spirit” (1Jn.3:24; 4:13).

These various parables call our attention to the fact that “union with Christ” and unitive notions such as “become one” by the Holy Spirit have an inter-connection with other theological themes in Calvin’s theology, such as: Reconciliation; ecclesiology; Christology; the doctrine of Christ’s work; sanctification; justification; eternal life; the doctrine of the Holy Spirit’s work (or Pneumatology); faith; reason; soteriology; glorification; the doctrine of the Scriptures; grace; union with the Triune God; baptism; the Eucharist; covenant; love; and the doctrine of creation.¹³⁰

To sum up, Calvin frequently emphasizes “union with Christ” which contains the mystical, transcendental, spiritual, substantial, and real ‘notions.’ This verifies that the “union with Christ” thought has been dealt with as a theological principle or methodology in Calvin’s theology.

4.2.2.2. In Christ

The most representative ‘unitive notion’ of “union with Christ” is the expression “in Christ” (Jn. 15:5; Gal. 2:20),¹³¹ which confirms that our being united “in Christ” by the Holy Spirit, is surely a mystical, transcendental and incomprehensible notion. In the introduction I explained briefly that a notion such as “in Christ” is a very intimate expression in the New Testament. This ‘unitive notion’ is a metaphorical expression that, according to John’s gospel,

¹²³ *Institutes*, 4.17.38.

¹²⁴ *Institutes*, 2.13.1; 3.1.1.

¹²⁵ *Institutes*, 4.17.12; 4.14.7.

¹²⁶ *Institutes*, 3.18.3; 3.25.10.

¹²⁷ *Institutes*, 4.19.35.

¹²⁸ *Institutes*, 4.19.35.

¹²⁹ *Institutes*, 3.2.39; 3.11.5; 3.11.12; 3.14.9; 3.14.19; 3.17.5; 3.24.2; 4.15.15; J. Todd Billings, *Union with Christ: Reframing Theology and Ministry for the Church* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2011), 65.

¹³⁰ *Institutes*, 2.12.7; 2.13.1; 3.1.1; 3.1.2; 3.1.3; 3.2.24; 3.11.5; 3.11.10; 3.11.21; 3.16.2; 3.17.11; 3.18.3; 3.25.10; 3.1.2; 4.14.7; 4.15.15; 4.17.2; 4.17.10; 4.17.11; 4.17.12; 4.17.14; 4.17.20; 4.17.24; 4.18.10; 4.19.35; 4.17.38.

¹³¹ For the connection between the “union with Christ” thought and “in Christ,” see J. Todd Billings, *Calvin, Participation, and the Gift*, 19.

Jesus Christ used directly (Jn. 15:4; 17:21-23). At the same time, John and Paul also used it comprehensively in their Gospels and the Epistles. Andreas J. Köstenberger's following statement insists on this fact:

John's gospel and Paul's letters reflect different but contradictory perspectives. Both emphasize love (John 13:13-14; 1 Corinthians 13), consider the world to be in darkness and its wisdom futile, and use the phrase "in Christ" or "in him"¹³² (own emphasis).

The expression "in Christ" is the representative metaphorical expression of "union with Christ." In fact, this 'unitive notion' "in Christ (*en Christō*)" appears 216 times in the Pauline letters, and 26 times in the Johannine letters in forms similar to the various metaphorical expressions like "in Christ Jesus (*en Christō Iēsou*)," or "in Him (*en autō*)."¹³³ This numerical result excludes the general letters. Here, the exclusion is not restricted to those letters, but also other similar metaphorical expressions such as "in the Lord," "in Whom," "with Christ," "with the Lord," "with Him," and "through Christ," besides the opposite-directional expressions of the "union" thought as "Christ *in us*."¹³⁴

The 'unitive notion' "in Christ," which is related to the "union with Christ" thought, echoes in Calvin's theology in various similar formulations, such as the metaphorical expressions: "The Holy Spirit makes us partakers *in Christ*,"¹³⁵ "we are accepted *in Christ* by God,"¹³⁶ "we live *in Christ*,"¹³⁷ "we are justified *in Christ*,"¹³⁸ "we are adopted God *in Christ*,"¹³⁹ and "*in Christ* we possess the whole of deity."¹⁴⁰ Additionally, the "union" thought as "Christ *in us*" (Gal. 2:20; Eph. 3:17), is similar to "in Christ," and has frequently been dealt with by the various metaphorical expressions in Calvin's theology.¹⁴¹

If seen from this point of view, in the Scriptures and Calvin's theology, the notion

¹³² Andreas J. Köstenberger, *A Theology of John's Gospel and Letters: Biblical Theology of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2009), 563.

¹³³ Bruce Demarest, *The Cross and Salvation: The Doctrine of Salvation* (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway Books, 2006), 313, 467-8.

¹³⁴ For other similar metaphorical expressions of the 'unitive notion' of the "union with Christ" thought to "in Christ" in the New Testament, especially in the Pauline letters, see Constantine R. Campbell, *Paul and Union with Christ: An Exegetical and Theological Study* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2012).

¹³⁵ *Institutes*, 4.14.16.

¹³⁶ *Comm.* on Gal. 2:20.

¹³⁷ *Comm.* on Gal. 2:20; *Comm.* on 1 Co. 10:16.

¹³⁸ *Institutes*, 3.11.9; 3.11.11; 3.11.12; 3.11.22; 3.11.23.

¹³⁹ *Institutes*, 2.6.1; 3.17.5; 3.17.6; 3.18.3; 3.24.1; 3.24.5; *Comm.* on Gen. 17:8; *Comm.* on Isa. 40:8; 60:2; *Comm.* on Luke 23:43; *Comm.* on John 3:19; *Comm.* on Acts 10:4; *Comm.* on Eph. 2:4; *Comm.* on Php. 1:7; *Comm.* on 1 Th. 4:14; 5:10; *Comm.* on 2 Ti. 1:9; *Comm.* on Titus 3:5-6; *Comm.* on Heb. 6:4; 10:22; *Comm.* on 1 John 1:3.

¹⁴⁰ *Institutes*, 3.11.5.

¹⁴¹ *Institutes*, 3.7.1; 3.17.5; 4.17.12; 4.17.18; 4.17.42; 4.19.35.

which has been dealt with more comprehensively than the others in “union with Christ” is the notion “in Christ.” As a core thought, it has specific significance because it is at the central of the thought. The unitive notion of “union with Christ” as “in Christ” will contribute toward our understanding of our identity as Christians, and of almost every theological theme, and of the various related texts of the Scriptures.

Regarding the aspect of the sheer it is not easy to deal individually with all of the various unitive metaphorical expressions. Therefore, I will concentrate only on its more direct expressions. Calvin used this unitive metaphorical expression of “in Christ” together with other similar words such as ‘Christ becomes “one” or “one body” with us by the Holy Spirit’ in statements such as “in Christ Jesus,”¹⁴² (Eph. 2:16) “in the Lord,”¹⁴³ (Eph. 2:20-21) or “in Him”¹⁴⁴ (2Co. 5:21). Furthermore, he also used the metaphorical expression “Christ in us,” which expresses the relationship from the other direction. In the same manner, Calvin interpreted his various ‘theological themes,’ and ‘biblical texts’¹⁴⁵ comprehensively using these expressions.¹⁴⁶

Calvin’s treatment of these unitive notions show inter-connection to various other theological themes, such as the following: Soteriology; reconciliation; election; atonement; God’s grace; God’s love; the impartation of righteousness; eternal life (or life in Christ); the Kingdom of God; God’s mercy; repentance; justification; Christian philosophy; reason; Pneumatology; the suffering of the saints; the doctrine of the Trinity; the doctrine of God; Christology; sanctification; regeneration; prayer; the doctrine of the Bible; the doctrine of the adoption; ecclesiology; the doctrine of the Sacrament; the doctrine of revelation; baptism; the Eucharist; and the perseverance of the saints.¹⁴⁷

As mentioned, these are the results of analyzing only the more direct expressions of the unitive notion “in Christ.” In other words, it is a fact that the thought’s theological role or

¹⁴² *Institutes*, 2.16.16.

¹⁴³ *Institutes*, 4.6.5.

¹⁴⁴ *Institutes*, 2.17.5; 3.5.2; 3.11.5; 3.11.9; 3.11.11; 3.20.21; 4.6.5; 4.14.17; 4.15.5; 4.17.42.

¹⁴⁵ For the connection between “in Christ” and the Scriptures, and also the explanation of why Calvin interpreted the New Testament by the unitive notion of “union with Christ” as “in Christ,” see the following treatises and books: A. J. M. Wedderburn, *Baptism and Resurrection: Studies in Pauline Theology against Its Graeco-Roman Background* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1987), 346; Anthony A. Hoekema, *Saved by Grace* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1989), 65; Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Systematic Theology*, ed. John F. Walvoord (Wheaton, Ill.: Victor, 1988), 2:135-48; Neil T. Anderson, Robert L. Saucy, *The Common Made Holy* (Eugene, Oreg.: Harvest, 1997), 177-9.

¹⁴⁶ Richard N. Longenecker, *Galatians: Word Biblical Commentary*, Vol. 41 (Dallas, Texas: Word Books, 1990), 92-3. The interchangeable expressions of the various parables for “in Christ” have been dealt with not only in Calvin’s theology, but also in the New Testament, with the same formula.

¹⁴⁷ *Institutes*, 2.16.19; 2.17.2; 2.17.5; 3.3.19; 3.3.20; 3.5.2; 3.7.1; 3.8.7; 3.11.9; 3.11.11; 3.11.5; 3.17.5; 3.20.21; 3.20.36; 4.6.5; 4.6.10; 4.14.16; 4.14.17; 4.15.5; 4.17.12; 4.17.18; 4.17.42; 4.19.36.

comprehensiveness will obviously be extended further if it includes all of the various direct and indirect metaphorical expressions of the ‘unitive notion,’ contained in all of the *Institutes*, biblical commentaries, and Calvin’s entire theological work.

The close inter-connectedness between the comprehensiveness of the “union with Christ” thought and the various theological themes means that the interpretations of the Bible and almost every theological theme must be balanced in light of a variety of theological expressions. Practically, the “union with Christ” thought, which contained the unitive notion of “in Christ,” has operated as a ‘core thought’ that unlocks almost all of Calvin’s theological themes and so verifies that the union thought acts as a key theological tool, as a ‘theological interpretative central principle,’ or ‘biblical interpretative central principle’ in Calvin’s theology.

To sum up, Calvin treats the “union with Christ” thought comprehensively as a ‘core thought’ in his theology through the mystical, transcendental, ontological, substantial, spiritual, and real ‘notions,’ which exist fundamentally in unitive metaphorical expressions, such as “in Christ.”

4.2.2.3. Christ Dwells in Us

Another representative metaphorical expression of the ‘unitive notions’ is “Christ dwells in us” (Jn. 6:56; Ro. 8:9-11; 2Co. 13:5; 1Jn. 3:24; 4:13). This expression is a ‘relational notion,’ but also an obvious ‘unitive notion’ in the aspect of its meaning as being transcendental, incomprehensible, mystical, substantial, and real. Calvin treats the concept of “dwelling”¹⁴⁸ in depth in his theology, using synonymous words such as “abide”¹⁴⁹ or “indwelling”¹⁵⁰ interchangeably. The following quotations from the *Institutes* are examples that indicate how Calvin has used synonymous words of the ‘unitive parable’ “dwelling:”

Paul denies that those who are not moved by the spirit of Christ are servants of Christ (Ro. 8:9). These men devise a Christianity that does not require the Spirit of Christ. He holds out no hope of blessed resurrection unless we feel *the Spirit dwelling in us* (Ro. 8:11)... Unless one knows that *Christ dwells in him*, he is reprobate (2 Co. 13:5). “Now we know,” says John, “that *he abides in us* from the Spirit whom he has given us” (1 Jn. 3:24; 4:13)... But, actually, they declare by their own example how truly

¹⁴⁸ *Institutes*, 2.2.16; 2.9.3; 2.10.23; 2.12.6; 3.1.1; 3.1.2; 3.2.13; 3.2.24; 3.2.33; 3.2.39; 3.11.6; 3.11.12 (refutation against Osiander); 3.14.9; 4.17.5; 4.17.12.

¹⁴⁹ *Institutes*, 3.1.4; 3.2.39; 3.3.20; 3.15.6; 4.17.5; 4.17.8; 4.17.33; 4.17.34.

¹⁵⁰ *Institutes*, 3.11.5; 3.11.10; 3.14.19; 4.17.5.

Christ spoke: “My Spirit was unknown to the world; he is recognized only by those among *whom he abides*” (Jn. 14:17)¹⁵¹ (own emphasis).

For even though the apostle teaches that “*Christ dwells in our hearts through faith*” (Eph. 3:17), no one will interpret *this indwelling* to be faith, but all feel that he is there expressing a remarkable effect of faith, for through this believers gain *Christ abiding in them*¹⁵² (own emphasis).

On the other hand, Calvin’s expressions of the ‘unitive notion’ as “*dwelling*” contain the theological meaning of “union with the Triune God” thought. In practice, Calvin has dealt comprehensively with the expressions of Trinitarian “dwelling” in his theology, as “the Holy Spirit *dwells* in us,”¹⁵³ “through God’s Holy Spirit he *dwells* in us,”¹⁵⁴ and “Christ *dwells* in us only through his Spirit”¹⁵⁵ (Ro. 8:9), all expressions internally verifying that his theology pursues a ‘Trinitarian-centric theology in Christ,’¹⁵⁶ and also that such a ‘Trinitarian theological formula’ is as a central theological principle in the “union with Christ” thought.

One can put forward much evidence to show that for Calvin a ‘Trinitarian-centric theology in Christ’ has played a central role in his “union with Christ” thought. See in this regard the following references from his *Institutes*, and also other theologian’s evaluations in the following treatises and books: *Institutes*, 1.13.16; 1.13.24; 1.15.5; 1.15.6; 2.2.1; 2.3.7; 2.3.8; 2.3.10; 2.8.34; 2.8.51; 2.10.2; 2.10.7; 2.10.7; 2.10.8; 2.10.15; 2.8.23; 2.11.10; 2.11.11; 2.12.1; 2.12.6; 2.14.3; 2.15.4; 2.15.5; 2.16.3; 2.16.14; 2.16.16; 3.1.1; 3.1.2; 3.1.3; 3.2.1; 3.2.12; 3.2.33; 3.2.35; 3.2.39; 3.3.14; 3.6.2; 3.11.5; 3.11.8; 3.11.9; 3.11.12; 3.14.6; 3.14.9; 3.14.18; 3.14.19; 3.17.5; 3.17.6; 3.18.3; 3.23.14; 3.24.1; 3.24.2; 3.25.2; 3.25.10; 4.1.2; 4.1.3; 4.1.20; 4.6.5; 4.14.16; 4.17.10; 4.17.12; 4.17.18; 4.17.31; 4.17.33; 4.17.42; Oliver D. Crisp, “Calvin on Creation and Providence,” in *John Calvin and Evangelical Theology: Legacy and Prospect*, ed. Sung Wook Chung (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009), 64-5; Douglas F. Kelly, “The True and Triune God: Calvin’s Doctrine of the Holy Trinity (1.11-13),” in *Theological Guide To Calvin’s Institutes: Essays and Analysis*, ed. David W.

¹⁵¹ *Institutes*, 3.2.39.

¹⁵² *Institutes*, 4.17.5.

¹⁵³ *Institutes*, 2.10.23.

¹⁵⁴ *Institutes*, 3.14.9.

¹⁵⁵ *Institutes*, 4.17.12.

¹⁵⁶ See Eberhard Busch, “God and Humanity,” in *The Calvin Handbook*, ed. Herman J. Selderhuis, trans. Judith J. Guder, Henry J. Baron, Randi H. Lundell, and Gerrit W. Sheeres (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 225-6; Eric J. Alexander, “The Supremacy of Jesus Christ,” in *John Calvin: A Heart for Devotion Doctrine & Doxology*, ed. Burk Parsons (Lake Mary, FL: Reformation Trust Publishing, 2008), 109-10; Matthias Freudenberg, “Calvin’s Reception in the Twentieth Century,” in *The Calvin Handbook*, ed. Herman J. Selderhuis, trans. Judith J. Guder, Henry J. Baron, Randi H. Lundell, and Gerrit W. Sheeres (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 496-505.

Hall and Peter A. Lillback (Phillipsburg, New Jersey: P&R Publishing, 2008), 69-71; Julie Canlis, “Calvin, Osiander and Participation in God,” *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 6, no. 2 (April 2004): 169-84; John Meyendorff, Robert Tobias, *Salvation in Christ: A Lutheran Orthodox Dialogue* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1992), 22-3; J. Todd Billings, “Union with Christ and the Double Grace: Calvin’s Theology and Its Early Reception,” in *Calvin’s Theology and Its Reception: Disputes, Developments, and New Possibilities*, ed. J. Todd Billings and I. John Hesselink (Louisville, Kentucky: John Knox Press, 2012), 49, 55.

If seen in more detail, Calvin has dealt with the unitive metaphorical notion of “union with Christ” as having the same inter-connection as other notions with various theological themes, such as the following: Pneumatology; eternal life (or life in Christ); the doctrine of creation; the doctrine of God; God’s image; soteriology; the resurrection; sanctification; glorification; eschatology; the Kingdom of God; faith; union with the Triune God; adoption; the perseverance of the saints; epistemology; repentance; the doctrine of Christ’s work; the Trinity; justification; reconciliation; regeneration; the impartation of righteousness; God’s grace; God’s mercy; calling; and the Eucharist.¹⁵⁷

To summarize, the metaphorical expression of the unitive notion as “dwelling” provides crucial evidence illuminating the importance of the “union with Christ” thought and its biblical or theological role. Calvin interpreted the various theological themes and annotated biblical texts, and also demonstrated the Christian doctrines against theologians such as Osiander¹⁵⁸ by the biblical and unitive notion of “union with Christ.”

Except for those mentioned earlier, the metaphorical expressions related to the ‘unitive notions’ of Calvin’s “union with Christ” thought permeates his entire theology in the following expressions: “We have been *united* with Christ;” “holy *union*, or sacred *union*;” and “The Holy Spirit as the bond that *unites* us to Christ.”¹⁵⁹ These expressions are obviously the ‘unitive notions’ between Christ and us and includes mystical, incomprehensible, transcendental, spiritual, essential, substantial, and real dimensions.

To sum up, the metaphorical expressions of the ‘unitive notions’ of “union with

¹⁵⁷ *Institutes*, 2.10.23; 2.12.6; 3.1.1; 3.1.2; 3.1.4; 3.2.13; 3.2.24 3.2.33; 3.2.39; 3.3.20; 3.11.5; 3.11.6; 3.11.10; 3.11.12; 3.14.9; 3.14.19; 3.15.6; 3.24.2; 4.17.5; 4.17.8; 4.17.12; 4.17.33; 4.17.34.

¹⁵⁸ For Osiander’s theological thought and its theological error pertaining to the “union with Christ” thought, see the following treatises and books: *Institutes*, 3.11.5; 3.11.6; 3.11.7; 3.11.8; 3.11.9; 3.11.10; 3.11.11; 3.11.12; J. Todd Billings, “John Calvin: United to God through Christ,” 206; idem, *Calvin, Participation, and the Gift*, 57-8; idem, “Union with Christ and the Double Grace: Calvin’s Theology and Its Early Reception,” 60-1.

¹⁵⁹ *Institutes*, 2.12.7; 2.16.7; 3.1.1; 3.1.3; 3.11.21; 3.16.2; 4.12.24; 4.14.7; 4.17.10; 4.17.31; 4.17.33; 4.17.38; 4.17.42; 4.17.44; 4.17.45; 4.19.36.

Christ” in Calvin’s theology, have the following theological features: Firstly, they play a role as a central ‘theological principle’ in Calvin’s theology. Calvin interpreted and explained almost all of his theological themes using these notions.

Secondly, the metaphorical expressions of the ‘unitive notion’ of the thought have a ‘practical influence.’ The meaning is simple and obvious; because the unitive notions do not have merely abstract, speculative, philosophical, and subjective features,¹⁶⁰ but essentially have substantial, real, ontological, vital and practical features.¹⁶¹

Lastly, in Calvin’s theology the crucial ‘theological role,’ ‘comprehensiveness,’ and ‘practical influence’ of these notions point to their ‘theological value.’ Therefore, Calvin has repeatedly emphasized their ‘theological value’ in his extensive discussions in this regard.

4.2.3. Metaphorical Expressions of Other Direct Biblical Notions

Almost every metaphorical expression of the “union with Christ” thought is a ‘direct biblical notion’ which has been dealt with in the Scriptures. Seen within a larger framework, the various metaphorical expressions of the relational and unitive notions are also simultaneously biblical notions, which accords with the description of Calvin as a thoroughly Bible-centric theologian. All his theological and pastoral works, namely the *Institutes*, biblical commentaries, sermons, treatises, catechisms, letters, Christian doctrinal demonstrations, and other theological works, the Scriptures, have this focus on the Word of God as the centre.

If we analyze Calvin’s theology from this perspective, we discover that there is an ‘indivisible theological interconnectedness’ between the different expressions in the

¹⁶⁰ See Cornelis P. Venema, “Calvin’s Doctrine of the Last Things: The Resurrection of the Body and the Life Everlasting (3.25 et al.),” in *Theological Guide To Calvin’s Institutes: Essays and Analysis*, ed. David W. Hall and Peter A. Lillback (Phillipsburg, New Jersey: P&R Publishing, 2008), 452-56; William S. Barker, “The Historical Context of the *Institutes* as a Work in Theology,” in *Theological Guide To Calvin’s Institutes: Essays and Analysis*, ed. David W. Hall and Peter A. Lillback (Phillipsburg, New Jersey: P&R Publishing, 2008), 8-10; Herman J. Selderhuis, “The *Institutes*,” in *The Calvin Handbook*, ed. Herman J. Selderhuis, trans. Judith J. Guder, Henry J. Baron, Randi H. Lundell, and Gerrit W. Sheeres (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 199-206; Arie Baars, “The Trinity,” in *The Calvin Handbook*, ed. Herman J. Selderhuis, trans. Judith J. Guder, Henry J. Baron, Randi H. Lundell, and Gerrit W. Sheeres (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 256.

¹⁶¹ See Jon Balserak, “*Accommodatio Dei*,” in *The Calvin Handbook*, ed. Herman J. Selderhuis, trans. Judith J. Guder, Henry J. Baron, Randi H. Lundell, and Gerrit W. Sheeres (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 376-7; Cornelis P. Venema, *Accepted and Renewed in Christ: The Twofold Grace of God and the Interpretation of Calvin’s Theology* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007), 14-5.

Institutes.¹⁶² An analysis of Calvin's *Institutes* and biblical commentaries reveals that the important theological themes have been dealt with conscious of their inter-connection. This feature of Calvin's theology emerges clearly in the following statement by R. Ward Holder:

Another instance of the character of renewal in Calvin's thought was that his theology was constantly in conversation with itself; he frequently brought material into his treatises, commentaries, and the *Institutes* that had originated in another genre within his corpus. It has been carefully suggested that the ongoing engagement with the Scriptures, especially in the commentaries, was a factor in the development of Calvin's theology (McKee, "Exegesis, Theology, and Development," 154-156). This is correct, and even goes beyond that. Material moved from the *Institutes* into the commentaries, from the commentaries into the *Institutes*, and both from the *Institutes* and into the *Institutes* from polemical treatises. The two reasons for this are that Calvin both worked out his theology over time, and that he wished to reinforce his points to reach his central goals of edification for a variety of audiences.¹⁶³

From this point of view, therefore, the "union with Christ" thought also has an indivisible relationship with all his other theological works, especially his biblical commentaries,¹⁶⁴ as can be seen in his sermons,¹⁶⁵ treatises,¹⁶⁶ letters,¹⁶⁷ catechisms,¹⁶⁸ Opera,¹⁶⁹ and Corpus.¹⁷⁰ Especially his biblical commentaries apply the 'implicit (or indirect)

¹⁶² See K. Scott Oliphint, "A Primal and Simple Knowledge," in *Theological Guide To Calvin's Institutes: Essays and Analysis*, ed. David W. Hall and Peter A. Lillback (Phillipsburg, New Jersey: P&R Publishing, 2008), 17-21; Michael Beintker, "Faith – Introduction," in *Calvin Today: Reformed Theology and the Future of the Church*, ed. Michael Welker, Michael Weinrich, and Ulrich Möller (London: T&T Clark, 2011), 5.

¹⁶³ R. Ward Holder, "Tradition and Renewal" in *The Calvin Handbook*, ed. Herman J. Selderhuis, trans. Judith J. Guder, Henry J. Baron, Randi H. Lundell, and Gerrit W. Sheeres (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 390.

¹⁶⁴ John Calvin, *Commentarius in Epistolam Pauli Ad Romanos, Ioannis Calvini Opera Omnia* (Genève: Librairie Droz, 1999), 120-1; idem, *Commentarii in Pauli Epistolas, Ioannis Calvini Opera Omnia* (Genève: Librairie Droz, 1992), 16:272-3; idem, *Commentarii in Epistolas Canonicas, Ioannis Calvini Opera Omnia* (Genève: Librairie Droz, 2009), 20:327-8; idem, *In Evangelium Secundum Johannem Commentarius Pars Altera, Ioannis Calvini Opera Omnia* (Genève: Librairie Droz, 1998), 2:150, 223.

¹⁶⁵ *Serm.* on Dt. 2:1-7; 5:12-17, 19; *Serm.* on 1 Sa. 2:27-36; *Serm.* on Job. 15:11-16; 21:13-15; *Serm.* on Ps. 109:5; *Serm.* on Isa. 53:4-6, 7-8, 9-10; *Serm.* on Mt. 2:23; 3:13-17; 26:67-27:10; *Serm.* on Lk. 2:1-4, 50-52; *Serm.* on Ac. 1:1-4; 2:1-4; *Serm.* on 1 Co. 10:15-18; *Serm.* on Gal. 3:26-29; *Serm.* on Eph. 1:17-18; 2:8-10; 3:14-19; 4:20-24; 5:25-27, 28-30, 31-33; *Serm.* on Tit. 1:7-9; 3:5-7; John Calvin, *Sermons on the Ten Commandments*, ed. and trans. Benjamin W. Farley (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker, 1980), 39, 45; idem, *The Mystery of Godliness and Other Selected Sermons* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1950), 13-9.

¹⁶⁶ *TT.* 2:121, 161, 169-72, 219, 224-6, 270, 277-9, 280-1, 283, 292-3, 302, 321, 374, 384, 399, 401-5, 414, 506-8, 516-8, 529, 541.

¹⁶⁷ *Letters*, 1:369, 374; 3:23, 31-2, 56, 82, 122, 257, 277, 451-3, 454-6.

¹⁶⁸ John Calvin, *Catechism, 1538*, trans. Ford Lewis Battles (Pittsburgh, 1972), Q. 91, 353, 354. It is quoted from I. John Hesselink, *Calvin's First Catechism: A Commentary: Featuring Ford Lewis Battles's translation of the 1538 Catechism* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997).

¹⁶⁹ *OS.* 1:73, 129, 166, 508; 2:88; 3:84, 128, 279-80, 360, 396, 404-8, 424, 446-7, 478, 485; 4:1-2, 5, 7, 14, 17-9, 18-28, 34-5, 46, 63, 78, 147-8, 185-7, 191-2, 206-7, 223-5, 239, 244-9, 263, 329, 388, 392, 416,

formulae.’ Nevertheless, the full scope of the “union with Christ” thought remains unfathomed. Its sheer volume renders it almost inexhaustible in its detail, and this task falls beyond the scope of this dissertation. For these reasons I will focus on the fact that Calvin’s “union with Christ” thought is obviously a biblical notion, by introducing some relevant parts of his biblical commentaries.

The books to which the ‘implicit (or indirect) formula,’ are applied in Calvin’s biblical commentaries and sermons are the following: Genesis,¹⁷¹ Exodus,¹⁷² Deuteronomy,¹⁷³ 1 Samuel,¹⁷⁴ Job,¹⁷⁵ Psalms,¹⁷⁶ Isaiah,¹⁷⁷ Jeremiah,¹⁷⁸ Ezekiel,¹⁷⁹ Daniel,¹⁸⁰ Hosea,¹⁸¹ Zechariah,¹⁸² Malachi,¹⁸³ Matthew,¹⁸⁴ Luke,¹⁸⁵ John,¹⁸⁶ Acts,¹⁸⁷ Romans,¹⁸⁸ 1 Corinthians,¹⁸⁹ 2 Corinthians,¹⁹⁰ Galatians,¹⁹¹ Ephesians,¹⁹² Philippians,¹⁹³ Colossians,¹⁹⁴ 1

433-5; 5:4, 140, 274, 285, 288-9, 293-4, 306, 310, 320-1, 342, 345-56, 389, 391-4, 402, 469.

¹⁷⁰ *CO.* 5:350, 6:127-8; 7:593-674; 9:30-3, 65, 70, 73, 192; 15:494-5, 722-4; 23:117; 149, 584-5; 24:446; 26:5-16, 284-5, 351; 29:353; 31:157, 323; 32:148; 33:720; 34:227-39; 35:640, 655; 36:441-2, 592; 37:86, 94-5; 38:465-66; 40:417; 41:48; 42:433; 43:8, 529; 45:2, 232, 299, 424, 613, 689; 46:457, 460-1, 477, 578-80, 966; 47:7, 55, 116, 145, 152-3, 183, 208, 241, 312, 334, 341-3, 387-8, 391; 48:4, 303, 346-7, 463, 588, 633-4; 49:105-10, 145, 147, 201, 308-10, 330-2, 395, 398-9, 464, 487-8, 667; 50:67, 74-5, 198-200, 251, 256; 51:164, 226-7, 336; 489-91, 613, 750, 768; 52:352, 430; 52:50, 94, 363, 365, 431; 54:442; 51:491; 767-9; 780; 55:27-8, 58, 64, 209, 226, 240, 252, 270-1, 312, 355-6, 368, 446.

¹⁷¹ *Comm.* on Ge. 6:5; 9:12; 17:8; 48:16.

¹⁷² *Comm.* on Ex. 6:5; 30:23.

¹⁷³ *Comm.* on Dt. 24:1-6; *Serm.* on Dt. 2:1-7; 5:12-17, 19; 24:1-6.

¹⁷⁴ *Serm.* on 1 Sa. 2:27-36.

¹⁷⁵ *Serm.* on Job. 15:11-16; 21:13-15.

¹⁷⁶ *Comm.* on Ps. 16:10; 22:22; 32:11; 103:3; 109:5; 133:1; *Serm.* on Ps. 109:5; Jean Calvin, *Calvin: Commentaries*, trans. Joseph Haroutunian, ed. Louise Pettibone Smith (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1958), 208.

¹⁷⁷ *Comm.* on Isa. 26:19; 35:4; 37:23; 40:8; 43:19; 45:19; 60:2; *Serm.* on Isa. 53:4-6, 7-8, 9-10.

¹⁷⁸ *Comm.* on Jer. 24:7; 31:34 (“We shall at length be really and fully united to thee (Almighty God) through Christ our Lord”); 33:8.

¹⁷⁹ *Comm.* on Eze. 17:22; 36:26-27.

¹⁸⁰ *Comm.* on Da. 7:27.

¹⁸¹ *Comm.* on Hos. 4:19; 11:1.

¹⁸² *Comm.* on Zec. 3:4.

¹⁸³ *Comm.* on Mal. 2:4, 9.

¹⁸⁴ *Comm.* on Mt. 3:2; 8:3; 11:2; 16:24; 25:40; 26:26; 28:19, 20; *Serm.* on Mt. 2:23; 3:13-17; 26:67-27:10.

¹⁸⁵ *Comm.* on Lk. 1:35; 10:30; 17:20; 22:19; 23:43; *Serm.* on Lk. 2:1-4, 50-52.

¹⁸⁶ *Comm.* on Jn. 3:5, 29; 5:11, 24, 26; 6:35, 51, 54, 56; 7:39; 8:44; 10:10; 13:18; 14:20, 25; 15:1, 7, 10; 16:27, 29; 17:3, 17, 19, 21, 22, 23, 26.

¹⁸⁷ *Comm.* on Ac. 4:3; 10:4; 13:36; 15:9; 20:21; *Serm.* on Ac. 1:1-4; 2:1-4.

¹⁸⁸ *Comm.* on Ro. 1:3; 3:31; 5:17; 6:2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 11, 8:9, 10, 11, 13, 16; 10:9.

¹⁸⁹ *Comm.* on 1 Co. 1:2, 5, 9, 30; 3:11, 23; 4:15; 6:11, 15, 16; 9:10; 10:4, 16, 17, 30; 11:3, 24; 12:12, 13; *Serm.* on 1 Co. 10:15-18.

¹⁹⁰ *Comm.* on 2 Co. 5:14, 21.

¹⁹¹ *Comm.* on Gal. 2:2, 15, 19, 20; 3:20; 4:19; 5:14, 24; 6:15; *Serm.* on Gal. 3:26-29.

¹⁹² *Comm.* on Eph. 1:4, 23; 2:4, 6, 7; 3:17; 4:12; 5:29, 30, 31, 32, 33; *Serm.* on Eph. 1:17-18; 2:8-10; 3:14-19; 4:20-24; 5:25-27, 28-30, 31-33.

¹⁹³ *Comm.* on Php. 1:7; 3:10.

¹⁹⁴ *Comm.* on Col. 1:20, 22, 24; 3:1, 3.

Thessalonians,¹⁹⁵ 2 Thessalonians,¹⁹⁶ 1 Timothy,¹⁹⁷ 2 Timothy,¹⁹⁸ Titus,¹⁹⁹ Hebrews,²⁰⁰ James,²⁰¹ 1 Peter,²⁰² 2 Peter,²⁰³ 1 John.²⁰⁴ The ‘central key’ remains the Scriptural analysis of the “union with Christ” thought.

To summarize, almost each of the various metaphorical expressions of Calvin’s “union with Christ” thought, taken from the Scriptures, form a complete unity with his ‘theological notions.’ This part will concentrate on the two representative metaphorical expressions of the “union with Christ” thought.

4.2.3.1. We Have Been Engrafted in Christ

In Calvin’s theology, and also in the metaphorical expressions of the ‘other more direct biblical notions’ related to “union with Christ” thought, the one expression that has been used more frequently than others is the expression that as believers we are “*engrafted* into Christ.” This notion of “*engrafted*”²⁰⁵ (Ro. 11:17-19) has been treated comprehensively in Calvin’s theology together with expressions of the same essential meaning, such as “we *engrafted* into Christ,”²⁰⁶ or “we are *grafted* in Christ.”²⁰⁷

Calvin emphasizes the importance of the “union with Christ” thought by this biblical notion of “engrafted,” through the various expressions such as “*engrafted* into the body of the only-begotten Son,”²⁰⁸ “*engraft* us spiritually into the body of Christ,”²⁰⁹ “*engrafted* into the death and life of Christ,”²¹⁰ “*engrafts* us into his body;”²¹¹ “*engrafted* into Christ through faith;”²¹² “*engrafted* into the body of the church,”²¹³ and “*engrafted* to their

¹⁹⁵ *Comm.* on 1Th. 4:14; 5:10.

¹⁹⁶ *Comm.* on 2 Th. 1:10, 12; 6:2.

¹⁹⁷ *Comm.* on 1 Ti.2:5; 3:16.

¹⁹⁸ *Comm.* on 2 Ti.1:9; 2:8, 11.

¹⁹⁹ *Comm.* on Tit. 3:5, 6; *Serm.* on Tit. 1:7-9; 3:5-7.

²⁰⁰ *Comm.* on Heb. 1:3, 12; 2:4, 5, 10, 11, 17; 3:1, 14; 4:15; 5:2, 9, 13; 6:4; 9:11, 12, 15; 10:22, 24; 12:8; 13:10.

²⁰¹ *Comm.* on Jas. 2:14.

²⁰² *Comm.* on 1 Pe. 1:2, 4, 20; 2:9, 23, 24; 3:7; 4:1.

²⁰³ *Comm.* on 2 Pe. 1:4.

²⁰⁴ *Comm.* on 1 Jn. 1:3; 2:5, 6, 12; 3:5; 3:27; 4:14, 15; 5:11, 12, 20.

²⁰⁵ *Comm.* on Jn. 17:3; *Institutes*, 2.3.9; 2.6.1; 2.8.57; 2.12.1; 2.13.2; 2.16.13; 3.1.1; 3.2.24; 3.2.30; 3.2.35; 3.3.20; 3.6.3; 3.11.10; 3.15.5; 3.15.6; 3.17.10; 3.21.7; 3.22.6; 3.22.7; 3.24.5; 3.24.6; 4.1.21; 4.15.1; 4.15.6; 4.16.17; 4.16.22; 4.16.31; 4.17.33.

²⁰⁶ *Institutes*, 3.2.24.

²⁰⁷ *Institutes*, 2.3.9; 3.24.6.

²⁰⁸ *Institutes*, 2.6.1.

²⁰⁹ *Institutes*, 2.13.2.

²¹⁰ *Institutes*, 4.15.6; 3.3.20; 2.16.13.

²¹¹ *Institutes*, 3.2.35; 3.6.3; 3.22.7.

²¹² *Institutes*, 3.15.6.

Head.”²¹⁴

“Engrafted” suggests several meanings, such as the following: Firstly, Calvin prescribes our Christian identity anew by using the biblical notion of “engrafted.” In other words, “*engrafted* into Christ” verifies our identity as “Christ makes us, grafted into his body, participants not only of all his benefits but also of himself,”²¹⁵ “we are already, in a manner, partakers of eternal life, having entered in the Kingdom of God;”²¹⁶ “we were engrafted into the body of Christ that he might share the same life;”²¹⁷ “we become sharers in all his blessings;”²¹⁸ and “we may be engrafted into Christ’s body, or, engrafted, may grow more and more together with him.”²¹⁹ In short, our identity as Christians is defined by the meaning of “Christ perfectly joins us with him in the heavenly life.”²²⁰

This reveals Calvin’s remarkable theological insight, for we have the identity of having become one with Christ by being “engrafted” by the Holy Spirit. Thus “engrafted” bestows upon us a theological basis to broaden the scope of our Christian identity. To give an example, by being ‘completely engrafted’ into Christ, our new identity will describe us as people ‘who are entrusted with Christ’s three offices,’ or ‘who are engrafted into Christ’s Mediatorial Work, namely as prophet, priest, and king (1 Peter 2: 9).’ Calvin himself mentioned the commission of Christ’s office in the following statement:

Now, therefore, the church still has, and always will have, him present. When Paul wishes to show the way in which he manifests himself, *he calls us back to the ministries which he has bestowed upon each member* (Eph. 4:7)... Christ (he says) is present with us. How? By the ministry of men, whom he has set over the governing of the church. Why not, rather, through the ministerial head, *to whom he has entrusted his functions?*²²¹ (own emphasis.)

Calvin’s clarification implies that our biblical identity as Christians and the Church is based on our “union with Christ.” We have become the people entrusted with Christ’s offices by the Holy Spirit, and through the union we become one with Christ. This new prescription broadens our Christian identity on theological and biblical grounds, and opens

²¹³ *Institutes*, 4.17.1; 4.1.21.

²¹⁴ *Institutes*, 3.21.7.

²¹⁵ *Institutes*, 3.2.24.

²¹⁶ *Institutes*, 3.15.6.

²¹⁷ *Institutes*, 3.22.6.

²¹⁸ *Institutes*, 4.15.6.

²¹⁹ *Institutes*, 4.17.33.

²²⁰ *Institutes*, 4.17.33.

²²¹ *Institutes*, 4.6.10.

the possibility of reformation and renovation of our Christian faith and life.

Secondly, Calvin's reference to "engrafted" functions as a central 'theological principle,' 'theological thought,' or 'theological methodology' that interprets the themes in his theology. Thus Calvin has treated the central thought's biblical notion as the inter-connection to the following theological themes: the doctrine of God's providence; Christology (Christ, the Mediator); the children of God; the law; grace; Christ's human nature; faith; deed; death; the resurrection; eternal life (or life in Christ); soteriology; Pneumatology; repentance; sanctification; the impartation of righteousness; the perseverance of the saints; the Kingdom of God (or heaven); justification; atonement; the covenant; predestination; ecclesiology; baptism (or paedobaptism); and the Eucharist.²²² This provides further evidence to indicate the central positioning of the "union with Christ" thought in Calvin's theology.

To sum up, Calvin's more direct biblical notion of "engrafted into Christ" serves to illuminate the importance of the "union with Christ" thought in the Scriptures,²²³ reaching to the identity of the Christian, and influencing methodology, theological themes and biblical texts. In a practical sense the central thought lends a motivational power, which reveals Calvin role as eminent biblical scholar, Reformer and theologian.

4.2.3.2. Christ Becomes Our Head

Strictly speaking, one metaphorical expressions of the "union with Christ" thought which recurs most frequently in the Scriptures is just "in Christ;" but as mentioned, the "union with Christ" thought has been subjected to the 'implicit (or indirect) formula' in more than 150 different alternatives, namely, as various biblical metaphorical expressions. The notion, "Christ becomes *our Head*" (Eph. 4:15) is just one of the metaphorical expressions that appears often.²²⁴ The parable of Christ becoming "*our Head*" is linked to similar expressions, such as "Christ is *the head of the church*"²²⁵ (Eph. 1:22) and "the church is *the body of Christ*"²²⁶ (Eph. 1:23), or by expressions in the opposite direction, such as "we are

²²² *Institutes*, 2.3.9; 2.6.1; 2.8.57; 2.13.2; 2.16.13; 3.1.1; 3.2.24; 3.2.30; 3.2.35; 3.3.20; 3.6.3; 3.11.10; 3.15.5; 3.15.6; 3.17.10; 3.21.7; 3.22.6; 3.22.7; 3.24.5; 4.15.1; 4.15.6; 4.16.17; 4.16.22; 4.17.33.

²²³ *Comm.* on Jn. 17:3; Michael S. Horton, *Covenant and Salvation*, 140.

²²⁴ *Comm.* on Mt. 16:24; *Comm.* on 1 Co 11:24; *Comm.* on Eph. 5:30; *Serm.* on Ephesians, 2: 6-19; *Institutes*, 2.16.16; 2.17.1; 3.1.1; 3.1.3; 3.2.24; 3.8.1; 3.9.5; 3.9.6; 3.11.5; 3.11.6; 3.11.10; 3.20.19; 3.21.7; 4.1.2; 4.1.3; 4.1.21; 4.2.5; 4.2.6; 4.3.1; 4.3.2; 4.6.9; 4.6.10; 4.6.17; 4.7.21; 4.7.24; 4.11.2; 4.14.15; 4.15.15; 4.15.22; 4.16.22; 4.17.1; 4.17.6; 4.17.9; 4.17.28; 4.17.38.

²²⁵ *Institutes*, 4.6.17; 4.6.9; 4.6.10; 4.7.21; 4.7.24; 4.17.9.

²²⁶ *Institutes*, 4.17.9; 4.3.1.

members of Christ”²²⁷ (Ro. 12:5) and “we already belonged to *the body of Christ*”²²⁸ (1 Co. 10:16-17; 12:12-17).

Calvin emphasizes the practical dynamic by such other more direct biblical notions as “We do not await heaven with a bare hope, but in *our Head* already possess it;”²²⁹ “We must therefore recognize *our Head* as the very foundation of grace. ...;”²³⁰ “The Father has sealed him as *our Head* and Leader;”²³¹ “Christ the common *Head of all*;”²³² “We are to grow up in every way into him who is *the Head*, into Christ ...;”²³³ “Christ as church’s *sole Head*;”²³⁴ “Christ the church’s *true Head*;”²³⁵ and “*the members of Christ* are regenerated with *their Head*.”²³⁶

In practice, notions like “Christ becomes *our Head*” or “We are *a member of Christ*” contain some essential theological meanings and features in themselves, the most representative being ‘the unity of the Church.’ Calvin emphasizes that the unity of the Church as “*one head* is ... the bond that unites all churches together,” and also as “there is *one head* and one source” of Christ in the Church.²³⁷ In the following citation, Calvin’s insistence on ‘the unity of the Church by the Head who is Christ’ verifies this fact:

For it has Christ as its sole Head, under whose sway all of us cleave to one another, according to that order and that form of polity which he has laid down... For Christ is the Head, “from whom the whole body, joined and knit together through every joint of the supply, when each part is working properly, makes bodily growth” (Eph. 4:15-16) ²³⁸ (own emphasis).

For the Lord so communicates his body to us there that he is made completely one with us and we with him. Now, since he has only one body, of which he makes us all partakers, *it is necessary that all of us also be made one body by such participation...* As it is made of many grains so mixed together that one cannot be distinguished from another, so it is fitting that in the same way we should be joined and bound together by

²²⁷ *Institutes*, 3.2.24; 3.11.5; 4.16.22; 4.17.6; 4.17.9.

²²⁸ *Institutes*, 4.15.22; 4.17.38.

²²⁹ *Institutes*, 2.16.16.

²³⁰ *Institutes*, 2.17.1.

²³¹ *Institutes*, 3.20.19.

²³² *Institutes*, 4.1.3.

²³³ *Institutes*, 4.3.1.

²³⁴ *Institutes*, 4.6.9; 4.6.17; 4.7.21.

²³⁵ *Institutes*, 4.7.24.

²³⁶ *Institutes*, 4.14.15.

²³⁷ *Institutes*, 4.6.17. Calvin’s argument is that he quoted from the statements of the Church Fathers such as Jerome and Cyprian.

²³⁸ *Institutes*, 4.6.9.

such great agreement of minds that no sort of disagreement or division may intrude... For what sharper goad could there be to arouse mutual love among us than when Christ, giving himself to us, not only invites us by his own example to pledge and give ourselves to one another, *but inasmuch as he makes himself common to all, also makes all of us one in himself*²³⁹ (own emphasis).

If this insistence is considered from a narrow viewpoint, Calvin opposed a fundamental hierarchy in the Church by the other more direct biblical notion that ‘Christ is the only the Head of the Church.’ From a broader perspective, however, he emphasized only ‘the unity of the Church’ in which every believer and every church become one under Christ as the only Head.

Reading Calvin’s ‘unity of the Church’ thought as “Christ becomes our Head” grants us a very special meaning today, although some unbiblical practices still exists in the Church today; this can be found in church-centric selfishness; continuing the church’s separation and disunion; ethnocentrism; racial discrimination; gender discrimination; status discrimination; the problem of human rights; and so on. From this point of view, the “union with Christ” thought provides important theological grounds for Church reformation, which would correct these unbiblical attitudes and practices.

On the other hand, the other more direct biblical notion of “Christ becomes our Head” also pertains essentially to the meaning of the “union with Christ” thought: it raises a theological issue about ‘the initiative of union’ between Christ and us. Calvin emphasized that the initiative of our union with Christ always belonged to Jesus Christ, who is our Head.²⁴⁰ In other words, the direction of the union always gives precedence to ‘the union from Christ,’ rather than from ‘the union from us.’ Ryken’s writes about this ‘initiative of union,’ as follows:

Jesus Christ unites us to Himself by the Holy Spirit; *this is how union with Christ is viewed from the perspective of God’s initiative*. Yet viewed from our perspective, there is a second bond of union with Christ: we are joined to Him by faith... It should be kept clearly in mind, however, that even faith itself is a gift of the Holy Spirit. The grace that saves us through faith is not our own doing; it is the gift of God (Eph. 2:8). Indeed, Calvin described faith as the Holy Spirit’s “principal work” in the life of a

²³⁹ *Institutes*, 4.17.38.

²⁴⁰ For the essential theological meanings and features of Calvin’s ‘initiative of union,’ see Chapter Five. For the ‘initiative of union,’ see the following in Calvin’s *Institutes*. *Institutes*, 2.3.6; 2.3.8; 2.3.9; 2.3.10; 2.3.11; 3.2.35; 3.2.39; 3.6.2; 3.11.7; 3.11.8; 3.11.9; 3.11.23; 3.15.5; 3.15.6; 3.16.1; 4.6.9; 4.16.31; 4.17.12; 4.17.30; 4.17.31.

believer. *The Spirit's divine agency means that the sovereignty of God's grace in as evident in Calvin's doctrine of union with Christ as it is anywhere else in his theology. God takes the gracious initiative to join us to Christ by the Holy Spirit, giving us the very faith that establishes a double bond with our Savior*²⁴¹ (own emphasis).

From this point of view, the notion, "Christ becomes our Head" melts the biblical and logical grounds about 'the initiative of union:' it confirms the positioning as "our Head" as essentially the biblical 'initiative of Christ.' In addition, this initiative influences interpretation of the various theological themes and the biblical texts. It also reveals how such themes and texts cohere theologically in the direction of this 'initiative of union' as being Triune God-centric, Christo-centric, and Pneumato-centric, allowing Calvin to pursue an integrated, coherent, consistent, all-inclusive and comprehensive theology containing both *katabatic* and *anabatic* theology,²⁴² but the initiative is the *katabatic* (from above to below).

The "union with Christ" thought, rendered as "Christ becomes our Head" or "We are a member of Christ" features as a central 'theological principle' to interpret the various theological themes and biblical texts in Calvin's theology, and forms connections with the various theological themes, such as the following: the Kingdom of God; eschatology; the ascension of Christ; Christ's merits (or grace); soteriology; faith; Pneumatology (or the doctrine of the Holy Spirit's work); sanctification; glorification; the theology of the cross; justification; the doctrine of Christ's human nature; hypostatical union; the importance of "union with Christ;" impartation of righteousness; Christ as the Mediator; election; perseverance of saints; ecclesiology; Christian office; eternal life; Trinitarian thought; the communion of the saints; the forgiveness of sin; God's mercy; the unity of the Church; commission as the three offices of Christ; the law; regeneration; baptism; the Eucharist; and the children of God.²⁴³ This verifies the "union with Christ" thought as a central theological principle in Calvin's theology.

While the centrality and significance of the "union in Christ" thought has been shown in its connections and references through metaphorical, synonymous expressions, it should not be treated analytically by separating the metaphorical expressions from the

²⁴¹ Philip Graham Ryken, "The Believer's Union with Christ," 195-6.

²⁴² *Katabatic* (*katabasis*) theology means a theology from above to below, and *anabatic* (*anabasis*) theology means a theology from below to above. For more detail on *katabasis* and *anabasis*, see Kye Won Lee, *Living in Union with Christ: The Practical Theology of Thomas F. Torrance* (New York: Peter Lang, 2003), 3-4.

²⁴³ *Institutes*, 2.16.16; 2.17.1; 3.1.1; 3.1.3; 3.2.24; 3.11.5; 3.8.1; 3.9.6; 3.11.5; 3.11.6; 3.11.10; 3.20.19; 3.21.7; 4.1.2; 4.1.3; 4.1.21; 4.2.6; 4.3.1; 4.3.2; 4.6.9; 4.6.10; 4.6.17; 4.7.21; 4.7.24; 4.14.15; 4.15.15; 4.16.22; 4.17.1; 4.17.6; 4.17.9; 4.17.38.

biblical notions, since its centrality is extended by its appearance in the Scriptures.

Almost every theological theme in Calvin's theology and in the Scriptures (especially the New Testament) resonates with an inter-connection to the "union with Christ" thought, either directly or indirectly. In this part, therefore, I will not treat the "union with Christ" thought by further analytical separation, but will move straight on to the next part.

4.2.4. Metaphorical Expressions of Socio-Cultural Notions

As has been shown, in Calvin's theology and in the Scriptures, the "union with Christ" thought has been treated not only by the 'implicit (or indirect) formula,' which uses the direct words "union with Christ," but also with the 'implicit (or indirect) formula' by the various metaphorical expressions in his theology and in the Scriptures. On the other hand, the various metaphorical expressions of the thought have been comprehensively treated as being inter-connected with the various theological themes.

This demands that we approach "union with Christ" not only as a 'doctrine' subordinated within soteriology or the doctrine of the sacrament, but as a theological 'thought,' 'principle,' or 'methodology.' In practice, when researching the scope of "union with Christ," the relationship with other theological themes, various metaphorical expressions, frequency of use, and essential meanings or features expose that the thought is central in Calvin's theology and in the Scriptures (especially in the New Testament).

Simultaneously the various metaphorical equivalent expressions for the "union with Christ" thought contain various theological meanings and each takes the form of various metaphorical notions. The important thing is that the various metaphorical notions' forms share the feature of inter-connectedness.

For example, the metaphorical expression 'unitive notion' as "we become one with Christ" can be divided into the 'relational notion' or the 'other more direct biblical notions' connected to the essential theological meaning of the thought. The metaphorical notions' form of the "union with Christ" thought has more variety and comprehensiveness. In addition, for the same reason, the thought also contains various essential or core theological meanings and features, with a closer inter-connection with various theological themes.

Calvin's "union with Christ" thought can be (as a way of distinguishing but not separating) be divided into the 'relational notions,' 'unitive notions' and 'other more direct biblical notions' (as discussed above). In addition one can also speak of what can be termed

metaphorical expressions of socio-cultural notions. In the Scriptures, “union with Christ” emphasized the thought’s theological meanings as having been conceived according to the socio-cultural contexts of those days.

Firstly, one such metaphorical expression is that draws can be placed in this category is the expression “*clothe* yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ” (Gal. 3:27; Ro.13:14). Of course, this expression contained the meaning of a ‘relational notion,’ which indicates an intimate connection between Christ and us, but it also included a socio-cultural notion, because “*clothe* ...” symbolized a special meaning in those day. In Calvin’s theology, this socio-cultural notions of the thought as “clothe ourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ” includes similar forms’ expressions, namely “we put on Christ,”²⁴⁴ or “covered by the righteousness of Christ.”²⁴⁵

In another aspect, this assumes a theological meaning, highlighting our identity as Christians, because the socio-cultural aspect of clothing directly symbolized the status of the person who wore the clothes. Therefore, to “put on Christ,” means that by the holy union our status and identity are linked to that of Christ.

From this point of view, and also in a practical sense, the metaphorical expression of “*clothe* yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ” will be grounds to prescribe, biblically and theologically our, Christian holy life, commission, office, and ethics. Included by Calvin’s treatment regarding this aspect, are the following themes: Soteriology; sanctification; faith; communion with Christ; Pneumatology; spiritual benefit; impartation of the righteousness; justification; the doctrine of the sacrament; baptism; the children of God; and the Eucharist.²⁴⁶

Secondly, another socio-cultural expression of “union with Christ” is the expression, “He had to become *ours*” (Ro. 8:32). The notion of ‘possession’ is an economical notion, but it also refers to the society and culture of those days. To ‘possess’ means that rights are transferred to someone. This imputes to the “union with Christ” thought a ‘covenantal’ meaning, that Christ will grant the whole of himself to us (Ro. 8:32).²⁴⁷ Christ has already bestowed himself to us completely through the incarnation and the redemptive

²⁴⁴ *Institutes*, 3.11.10.

²⁴⁵ *Institutes*, 3.11.11.

²⁴⁶ *Institutes*, 3.1.1; 3.1.3; 3.11.10; 3.11.11; 3.24.5; 4.14.7; 4.14.14; 4.15.6; 4.16.21.

²⁴⁷ For the connection between Calvin’s “union with Christ” thought and the covenantal meaning, see the following: Michael S. Horton, *Covenant and Salvation: Union with Christ* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2007); Peter A. Lillback, “Calvin’s Interpretation of the History of Salvation: The Continuity and Discontinuity of the Covenant (2.10-11),” in *Theological Guide To Calvin’s Institutes: Essays and Analysis*, ed. David W. Hall and Peter A. Lillback (Phillipsburg, New Jersey: P&R Publishing, 2008), 168-204.

event of the cross. Nevertheless, if seen from a paradoxical point of view, Christ, who has united us by the Holy Spirit, bestowed himself to us as our possession, which implies that he will eternally grant us the whole of himself; namely, his power, wisdom, and his whole personality, through union with us.

In a practical sense, Calvin has emphasized the biblical truth of the covenantal meaning that Christ completely bestows himself to us through “mystical union” by the Holy Spirit, in the following various expressions: “Christ may become *ours*,” “We *have* Christ;” “Christ *has been given* to us;” “Christ *was possessed* by us in faith;” “We *possess* the whole of deity;” “Christ *had been given* to us;” “We *possess* Christ more fully;” “Christ’s body *is offered* to us;” “Christ made himself *ours*,” “The Spirit alone causes us to *possess* Christ completely;” “We always *have* Christ;” and “We *possess* Christ entire.”²⁴⁸

On the other hand, Calvin emphasized “union with Christ” thought’s importance, and its practical roles and benefits by these metaphorical expressions. In detail, Calvin has comprehensively dealt with the various theological themes by using the ‘socio-cultural notion’ of “He had to become *ours*,” in Soteriology; Pneumatology; faith; grace; repentance; forgiveness of sin; reconciliation; adoption; sanctification; the doctrine of God; holy life; the doctrine of the Trinity; justification; revelation; the knowledge of God; the doctrine of the sacrament; Christology; the cross; atonement; the doctrine of ‘one for all;’²⁴⁹ the Eucharist; death; the resurrection; eternal life; baptism; and Christ’s presence.²⁵⁰

To sum up, the “union with Christ” thought’s close inter-connection between the comprehensiveness and the various theological themes indicates that the thought has played a role as a core thought in Calvin’s theology. Furthermore, “union with Christ” covers the socio-cultural notions such as ‘marriage’ as in “The Lord has *wedded* us to himself”²⁵¹ (1 Co. 11:2).

4.2.5. Metaphorical Expressions of Pneumatological-Mystical Notions

²⁴⁸ *Comm.* on Jn. 6:35; *Institutes*, 3.1.1; 3.3.14; 3.11.1; 3.11.5; 3.24.5; 4.14.16; 4.17.5; 4.17.11; 4.17.12; 4.17.28; 4.17.33.

²⁴⁹ The doctrine of ‘once for all’ is a doctrine of soteriology that states the redemptive death on the Cross of Jesus Christ becomes the fundamental power that is able to accomplish “once for all” (NIV, Ro. 6:10; Heb. 7:28; 1 Pe. 3:18). Here, the meaning of the “all” is an inclusive notion that contains every time, every ethnic group, every people, and every nation. For ‘once for all,’ see the following statement by Calvin: *Institutes*, 4.17.33.

²⁵⁰ *Comm.* on Jn. 17:3; *Institutes*, 3.1.1; 3.2.39; 3.3.1; 3.3.14; 3.11.1; 3.11.5; 3.16.1; 3.24.5; 4.14.16; 4.17.5; 4.17.11; 4.17.12; 4.17.28; 4.17.33.

²⁵¹ *Comm.* on 1 Co. 6:17; *Comm.* on Eph. 5:29; *Institutes*, 2.8.18; 2.12.7; 3.1.3.

“Union with Christ” thought furthermore relates extensively to what can be described as Pneumatological-mystical notions in Calvin’s theology, and these expose the essential theological meaning of the “union with Christ” thought as the most representative and the most frequent. For Calvin the “union with Christ” thought is related completely to the Holy Spirit because ‘union between Christ and us’ is plainly a “mystical union (*unio mystica*)” in a sense that it is only possible by the Holy Spirit.

From this point of view, the Pneumatological-mystical notion has been included fundamentally in every metaphorical expression of Calvin’s “union with Christ” thought. It means that the Pneumatological-mystical notion, namely ‘union with the Triune God and us by the Holy Spirit,’ or as ‘union with Christ and us through the Holy Spirit’ has existed fundamentally in every expression of the “union with Christ” thought. As the result, the Pneumatological-mystical notion of the metaphorical expression, “union with Christ” is dealt with comprehensively throughout Calvin’s entire theology by the direct-indirect expressive formulas.

In greater detail, these more direct parables appear in the following sentences and phrases: “We hold ourselves to be united with Christ *by the secret power of his Spirit*,” “this mystery of Christ’s *secret union* with the devout;” “Christ abides in us *from the Spirit* whom he has given us” (1 Jn. 3:24; 4:13); “not only Christ but also the Father and *the Holy Spirit*; dwell in us;” “*through God’s Holy Spirit* he dwells in us;” “Christ works in us *through his Spirit*” (Ro. 8:9-11); “Christ dwells in us *only through his Spirit*” (Ro. 8:9); “*the Spirit alone* causes us to possess Christ completely;” “Christ shares *his Spirit* with us;” “Christ seals such giving of himself *by the sacred mystery*,” “For that *Spirit of love* was given to Christ alone on the condition that he instill it in his members” (Ro. 5:5); “*the Spirit* dwelling in us” (Ro. 8:9-11); “We are one with the Son of God; not because he conveys his substance to us; but because; *by the power of the Spirit*,” and “Christ is also the root and seed of *heavenly life in us*” (Jn. 5:56; Ro. 6:4-5).²⁵²

These Pneumatological-mystical notions provide important grounds testifying to the biblical truth that ‘mystical union with Christ and us’ or ‘mystical union with the Triune God and us’ is a practical possibility. On the other hand, these bestow a very important theological principle, which can be interpreted in a Triune God-centric, Christo-centric, and Pneumato-centric way. In practice, Calvin starts with his various theological themes by using a central thought, or a theological principle with the thought’s Pneumatological-mystical

²⁵² CO. 15:723-4; *Institutes*, 3.11.5; 4.17.1; 4.17.28; 3.2.39; 3.24.2; 3.11.5; 3.14.9; 3.17.5; 4.17.12; 4.17.12; 4.17.5; 3.2.12; 3.2.39; 3.1.2; 3.8.7; *Comm.* on Jn. 17:3.

notions as they exist in the Scriptures, so that all his theological themes related to “union with Christ” have a connectedness that can never be separated from these Pneumatological-mystical notions.

4.2.6. Metaphorical Expressions of Substantial Notions

Calvin’s “union with Christ” thought has can also be described through metaphorical expressions that relates in a more formal way to what can termed substantial (or real) notions, even though it contains references to mystical union, transcendental union, spiritual union and faith union. This does not reduce the “union with Christ” thought to a speculative, abstract, and subjective notion. On the contrary, the union thought includes the substantial and real notions of ‘union with Christ and us.’ It introduces equilibrium to both sides of the static theology and the dynamic theology as ‘dogma and practice (application),’ ‘faith and action (deed),’ and ‘epistemological theology and practical theology’ by these substantial notions.

Calvin deals with the substantial notions of the “union with Christ” thought in his theology by the following expressions: “We feed upon *Christ’s own substance*,”²⁵³ “we must grow into one body by the communication of *Christ’s substance*,”²⁵⁴ “that sacred partaking of Christ’s flesh and blood ... as if it penetrated *into our bones and marrow*,”²⁵⁵ “Christ pours forth *his very life* into us,”²⁵⁶ “Christ imparts to us *his life*,”²⁵⁷ “*from the substance of his flesh Christ* breathes life into our souls,”²⁵⁸ “*Christ’s body breathes life* upon us by the secret power of the Spirit”²⁵⁹ (Ro. 8:9-11); “*the whole Christ* is offered us,”²⁶⁰ “our insertion *into the body of Christ*, to live by his Spirit,”²⁶¹ “*Christ makes us his body* not by faith only but by the very thing itself,”²⁶² “Christ first made *himself* ours,”²⁶³ “*Christ’s inspiring or breathing* into us,”²⁶⁴ “we are engrafted into the body of Christ that he might share *the same life*”²⁶⁵

²⁵³ *Comm.* on Mt. 26:26.

²⁵⁴ *Comm.* on Eph. 5:30; *Institutes*, 4.17.11.

²⁵⁵ *Institutes*, 4.17.10.

²⁵⁶ *Institutes*, 4.17.10; 4.17.18; 4.17.32.

²⁵⁷ *Comm.* on Jn. 17:3.

²⁵⁸ *Comm.* on Eph. 5:29-32; *Institutes*, 4.17.32.

²⁵⁹ *Institutes*, 4.17.34.

²⁶⁰ *Institutes*, 4.17.20.

²⁶¹ *Comm.* on Jas. 2:14.

²⁶² *Institutes*, 4.17.6.

²⁶³ *Institutes*, 4.17.11.

²⁶⁴ John Calvin, *Sermons on Galatians*, trans. Arthur Golding (London, 1574; rpt., Audubon, NJ: Old Paths Publications, 1995), 484.

²⁶⁵ *Institutes*, 3.22.6.

(1Jn. 5:11-12); “so that we begin to live only when we are ingrafted into him, and enjoy *the same life* with himself;”²⁶⁶ and “therefore he poured it into his Son, that it (*life*) might flow to us.”²⁶⁷

To summarize, “union with Christ” contains substantial notions since the thought carries ontological and viable power and influence; in short, it is the same as a spiritual treasure house.

4.2.7. Metaphorical Expressions of Effectual Notions

The “union with Christ” thought has also been dealt with extensively through metaphorical expressions that can be described as “effectual notions” in Calvin’s theology.²⁶⁸ What is the effectual notion? It means that it symbolizes the effect that people are able to see and feel in reality through the Holy Spirit.

In the same manner, many metaphorical expressions of the “union with Christ” thought carry notions of believers being able to see, feel, and experience in or through the Holy Spirit. Calvin has described them in the following parables: “We *grow together* with Christ”²⁶⁹ (Jn. 15:5); “We hold Christ by faith, *We always have Christ*,”²⁷⁰ “Christ is *present with us*,”²⁷¹ “*The Lord is in us all*, according to the measure of grace which he has bestowed upon each member”²⁷² (Eph. 4:6-7); “the secret power of the Spirit is *the bond of our union with Christ*,”²⁷³ “Christ is the Head ‘from whom the whole body, *knit together through joints*,’ grows into one”²⁷⁴ (Eph. 4:16); “Christ is near us... indeed *touches us*,”²⁷⁵ “*bringing Christ* to us,”²⁷⁶ “we believe in Christ when *we receive him* in faith,”²⁷⁷ “*we embrace Christ* not as appearing from after but as joining himself to us,”²⁷⁸ and “Christ’s spiritual *presence with us*.”²⁷⁹

By these effectual parables, Calvin shows us how to materialize effectually the

²⁶⁶ *Comm.* on Eph. 2:4.

²⁶⁷ *Comm.* on Jn. 5:26.

²⁶⁸ More detail of the spiritual notion of “union with Christ” will be provided in Chapter Five.

²⁶⁹ *Institutes*, 2.12.1; 2.13.1; 3.11.5; 4.17.33.

²⁷⁰ *Institutes*, 2.16.14.

²⁷¹ *Institutes*, 2.12.1; 3.11.5; 4.6.10; 4.8.11; 4.17.28; 4.17.30.

²⁷² *Institutes*, 4.17.10.

²⁷³ *Institutes*, 4.17.33.

²⁷⁴ *Institutes*, 2.13.1; 3.2.30; 3.15.6; 3.17.6; 4.1.3; 4.6.5; 4.17.9; 4.17.16; 4.17.24.

²⁷⁵ *Institutes*, 2.12.1.

²⁷⁶ *Institutes*, 3.11.7.

²⁷⁷ *Institutes*, 3.11.7; 4.17.11; 4.17.34.

²⁷⁸ *Institutes*, 3.11.8; 3.24.5; 3.24.6; 4.17.6.

²⁷⁹ *Institutes*, 4.6.10; 4.17.28; 4.17.31.

biblical and theological meanings that unite us with Christ, their virtual results and benefits, and Christian identity in the true sense of the word. In the same manner, through these metaphorical expressions, Calvin also reveals the effectual inter-connection between “union with Christ” and the various theological themes, such as the following: Christology; Pneumatology; the doctrine of the Triune God; the doctrine of the incarnation; soteriology; the doctrine of God; hypostatic union; the office of mediator of Christ; ecclesiology; faith; reconciliation; grace; sanctification; the life of Christian; justification; the doctrine of creation; the doctrine of God’s providence; eternal life; the relationship with God; eschatology; the Kingdom of God; children of God (or adoption); the perseverance of the saints; regeneration; predestination; the second coming of Christ; communion; Church’s unity; the commission of Christ’s office; the presence of Christ in the Church; Christ’s reign through the Holy Spirit in us; and the Eucharist.²⁸⁰ This allows the “union with Christ” thought to include various essential meanings in these effectual notions, which are related to biblical and theological themes.

The various expressions of the effectual notion of “union with Christ” provide theological and biblical grounds to prevent our faith and theology from becoming merely abstract, mystified concepts. In other words, these effectual expressions grant us the very important principle of being able to materialize our faith and theology in detail and practically in the Holy Spirit. From this point of view, “union with Christ,” which is a central thought of the Scriptures and Calvin, becomes a very important biblical truth, a theological principle, and a practical motivational power, which implies that we can taste, experience, feel, and realize our faith and theology practically through the Holy Spirit.

4.2.8. Metaphorical Expressions of Community Notions

“Union with Christ” has a focus on community; hence the presence of what can be described as “community notions.” There is communion between Christ and each believer, but also communion between Christ and the Church. In a practical sense, the thought has been described directly and indirectly as forms of a plural union, as both ‘union with Christ and us.’ Such more direct metaphorical expression of the community notion, however, implies the ‘union with Christ and the Church.’ Calvin explains biblically and theologically

²⁸⁰ *Institutes*, 2.12.1; 2.13.1; 2.16.14; 3.2.30; 3.11.5; 3.11.7; 3.11.8; 3.15.6; 3.17.6; 3.24.5; 3.24.6; 4.1.3; 4.6.5; 4.6.10; 4.8.11; 4.17.6; 4.17.9; 4.17.10; 4.17.11; 4.17.16; 4.17.24; 4.17.28; 4.17.30; 4.17.31; 4.17.33; 4.17.34.

our Church's identity, function and role, and essential theological meaning and mission by the expressions related to "communality notions."

The communality notions reside in the following expressions: "God is *the common Father of all* and Christ *the common Head*," "*all members of the church* are under one Head," "Christ deems marriage worthy of such honor that he wills it to be an image of his sacred union *with the church*" (Eph. 5:23-24, 32), "*Church* has in a way been joined to the steadfastness of Christ," "*the church* still has, and always will have, Christ present," "one head is, as it were, the bond that unites *all churches together*," "... unite Christ with *the church*," and "Christ makes himself *common to all*, also makes *all of us one* in himself."²⁸¹ In the same manner, the more direct communality parables of the "union with Christ" thought are almost all about 'union with Christ and our Church.'²⁸²

From this point of view, these communality notion parables of Calvin's "union with Christ" thought have emphasized the Church's importance, which is related to "union with Christ." We may now examine how the Church has been united with the living Christ substantially, in detail, practically and imaginatively.

Calvin entitled chapter one, which is an introduction to Book Four of the *Institutes*, "The True Church with Which as Mother of All the Godly We Must Keep Unity." He begins Book Four, which is the longest of all the books of the *Institutes*, in this manner, indicating thereby that he recognized the importance of our Church and the "union with Christ" thought. This becomes clear from his following statement:

As explained in the previous book, it is by the faith in the gospel that *Christ becomes ours and we are made partakers of the salvation and eternal blessedness brought by him*. Since, however, in our ignorance and sloth (to which I add fickleness of disposition) we need outward help to beget and increase faith within us, and advance it to its goal, God has also added these aids that he may provide for our weakness. And in order that the preaching of the gospel might flourish, *he deposited this treasure in the church... so that, for those to whom he is Father the church may also be Mother*²⁸³ (own emphasis).

As mentioned, Calvin's statement emphasizes that our Church is a vivid witness to, and an actual example of, the fact that we have been united practically with Christ. Therefore,

²⁸¹ *Institutes*, 4.1.3; 4.7.21; 4.12.24; 4.1.3; 4.6.10; 4.6.17; 4.17.28; 4.17.38.

²⁸² Besides, the communality notion's direct parables about Calvin's 'union with Christ and our Church' are the following: *Institutes*, 3.25.3; 4.1.2; 4.1.3; 4.1.21; 4.2.5; 4.2.6; 4.3.1; 4.6.5; 4.6.9; 4.6.10; 4.6.17; 4.7.21; 4.7.24; 4.11.2; 4.15.15; 4.17.1; 4.17.9; 4.17.28; 4.17.38; *Comm. on Eph. 5:32*; *OS*. 1:466.

²⁸³ *Institutes*, 4.1.1.

our ecclesiology should be illuminated through this “union with Christ” thought. The communality notion’s expressions of Calvin’s “union with Christ” thought, our Church’s essence, identity, function and role are not dealt with in great detail, but rather offer the various theological themes as based on the Scriptures.

From this viewpoint, “union with Christ” has a central role in Calvin’s ecclesiology, perhaps also affecting Calvin’s religious reforming movement. In the same manner, the ecclesiology of ‘union with Christ’ is keenly demanded from this point when the present Church seems to be deteriorating, degenerative, distorted, perverse, and nerveless, like the salt that loses its saltiness (Mt. 5:13).

4.2.9. Metaphorical Expressions of Eschatological Notions

The “union with Christ” thought also has an eschatological dimension. Calvin represented various eschatological notions²⁸⁴ in the following way: “Thus this prayer ought to draw us back from worldly corruptions, which so separate us from God that *his Kingdom* does not thrive within us”²⁸⁵ (Lk. 17:20-21); “For spiritual government, indeed, is already initiating in us upon earth certain beginnings of *the Heavenly Kingdom*”²⁸⁶ (Lk. 17:20-21); “the Son of God puts us in a class with himself, to lead us with himself to a blessed participation *in the glory of heaven*”²⁸⁷ (2 Pt. 2:9; Rev. 1:6; 5:10); “Christ will make us *partners and companions of that same glory* in our own flesh;”²⁸⁸ and “Christ perfectly joins us with him *in the heavenly life*.”²⁸⁹

These eschatological expressions, which are based on the Scriptures, have important theological meaning in Calvin’s theology. The representative theme among these examples is the Kingdom of God, for we are able to recognize that it exists in our internal world by the metaphorical expressions of eschatological notions. Additionally, those also feature significantly as ‘the power of the Gospel,’²⁹⁰ which, as Christians, we are able to see,

²⁸⁴ Calvin has dealt comprehensively with the various parables of the eschatological notion of “union with Christ” thought in his *Institutes* as follows: *Institutes*, 2.8.23; 2.9.4; 2.10.15; 2.12.3; 2.15.3; 2.15.4; 2.15.5; 2.16.9; 2.16.16; 2.16.19; 3.1.2; 3.2.1; 3.2.24; 3.3.19; 3.8.7; 3.9.6; 3.15.5; 3.15.6; 3.17.6; 3.20.42; 3.22.6; 3.24.5; 3.25.2; 3.25.3; 3.25.10; 4.3.4; 4.8.11; 4.16.17; 4.17.32; 4.18.4; 4.18.17; 4.18.20; 4.19.6; 4.19.7; 4.19.25; 4.20.2; 4.20.12.

²⁸⁵ *Institutes*, 3.20.42.

²⁸⁶ *Institutes*, 4.20.2.

²⁸⁷ Jean Calvin, *Calvin: Commentaries*, 219.

²⁸⁸ *Institutes*, 4.17.29.

²⁸⁹ *Institutes*, 4.17.33.

²⁹⁰ Joel R. Beeke, “Calvin on Piety,” in *John Calvin*, ed. Donald K. McKim (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 128. Beeke emphasizes the “union with Christ” thought: “This union is one of the

feel, experience, and realize, not only after death, but also today in our present world.²⁹¹

Besides such notions' metaphorical expressions as mentioned previously, Calvin's "union with Christ" thought has also dealt comprehensively with the various expressions in his theology, such as the following: "Christ partook of our nature;" "We are righteous only by participation in God" (2 Pt.1:4); "through Christ the Spirit was given to us;" "by Christ's righteousness we share the Spirit of God;" "We become united in one life and substance (if I may say so) with Christ;" "the spirit of man which is in him" (1 Co. 2:11); "he set the Son of God familiarly among us as one of ourselves;" "we obtain regeneration by Christ's death and resurrection only if we are sanctified by the Spirit and imbued with a new and spiritual nature;" "we; if we cleave to Christ; are members of one body" (1 Co.6:15;17; 12:12; Gal. 3:27); "namely; that being reconciled to God through Christ's blamelessness; we may have in heaven instead of a Judge a gracious Father;" "we ought first to cleave unto him so that; infused with his holiness;" "God the Father; as he has reconciled us to himself in his Christ; has in him stamped for us the likeness;" "we live in Christ;" "Christ living and reigning within us" (Gal.2:20); "Such is the union between us and Christ; who in some sort makes us partakers of his substance;" "Christ dwells within the heart" (Eph. 3:17); "God reforms us by his Spirit;" "by true partaking of Christ; his life passes into us and is made ours;" "we might be the righteousness of God in him" (2 Co.5:21); we come empty to him to make room for his grace in order that he alone may fill us;" Christ is our righteousness" (1 Co.1:30); "because all Christ's things are ours and we have all things in him;" "we eat Christ by believing;" "they have not so much as one drop of the heavenly life; but of his inspiring or breathing into us;" "the Son of God puts us in a class with himself;" "Our salvation comes from faith; which ties us to Good; and the only pathway is our insertion into the body of

gospel's greatest mysteries." For the viewpoint that tried to see "union with Christ" thought as a central key of the Gospel, see the following books: Lane G. Tipton, "Union with Christ and Justification," in *Justified in Christ: God's Plan for Us in Justification*, ed. K. Scott Oliphint (Fearn, Ross-Shire, UK: Mentor, 2007), 34; Michael S. Horton, "Calvin's Theology of Union with Christ and the Double Grace: Modern Reception and Contemporary Possibilities," in *Calvin's Theology and Its Reception: Disputes, Developments, and New Possibilities*, ed. J. Todd Billings and I. John Hesselink (Louisville, Kentucky: John Knox Press, 2012), 89.

²⁹¹ For the Kingdom of God's existence and dynamic related to Calvin's "union with Christ" thought in our internal world and in our the actual world, see the following books: *Institutes*, 2.9.4; 2.15.3; 2.15.4; 2.15.5; 2.16.9; 2.16.16; 2.16.19; 3.1.2; 3.2.1; 3.3.19; 3.8.7; 3.15.6; 3.17.6; 3.20.42; 3.22.6; 3.24.5; 4.3.4; 4.16.17; 4.17.32; 4.18.4; 4.18.17; 4.18.20; 4.19.6; 4.19.7; 4.20.2; 4.19.25; 4.20.12; Jean Calvin, *Calvin: Commentaries*, 202; John Bolt, "A Pearl and a Leaven: John Calvin's Critical Two-Kingdoms Eschatology," in *John Calvin and Evangelical Theology: Legacy and Prospect*, ed. Sung Wook Chung (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009), 242-6; Sinclair B. Ferguson, "Calvin's Heart for God," in *John Calvin: A Heart for Devotion Doctrine & Doxology*, ed. Burk Parsons (Lake Mary, FL: Reformation Trust Publishing, 2008), 35-6; D. G. Hart, "The Reformer of Faith and Life," in *John Calvin: A Heart for Devotion Doctrine & Doxology*, ed. Burk Parsons (Lake Mary, FL: Reformation Trust Publishing, 2008), 51; Bruce Milne, *Know The Truth: A handbook of Christian belief* (Nottingham: Inter Varsity Press, 2009), 241-2; Herman J. Selderhuis, *Calvin's Theology of the Psalms* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2007), 130-6.

Christ; to live by his Spirit; and also to be ruled by him;” and “by the secret virtue of the Holy Spirit, life is infused into us from the substance of his flesh.”²⁹²

²⁹² Jean Calvin, *Calvin: Commentaries*, 219; idem, *Sermons on Galatians*, 484; *Serm. on Eph. 3: 14-19*; *Comm. on Eph. 2:20, 5:30, 31, 32*; *Comm. on 1 Cor. 11:24*; *Comm. on Jas. 2:14*; *Institutes*, 2.11.10; 2.12.1; 2.16.7; 3.2.34; 3.6.2; 3.6.3; 3.7.1; 3.11.1; 3.11.5; 3.11.6; 3.11.8; 3.11.9; 3.11.10; 3.11.11; 3.11.12; 3.11.22; 3.11.23; 3.15.5; 3.16.2; 4.14.7; 4.15.6; 4.17.5; 4.17.10; 4.17.11; 4.17.18; 4.17.42; 4.19.35; *TT. 2:277, 283*; *CO. 9:70, 73*.

CHAPTER FIVE

The Theological Meanings of Calvin’s “Union with Christ” Thought

In his theology Calvin attends to the “union with Christ” thought, as discussed in the previous chapter, in the guises of various metaphorical expressions. Examination of these expressions has shown them to have a close inter-connection with various theological themes or biblical texts, which then reveals their biblical and theological meanings. Of these theological meanings more than 30 can be identified.¹

What is the ‘theological meanings’ associated with the “union with Christ” thought? This refers to the characteristic or peculiar theological meanings that find their coherence through the relation to the “union with Christ” thought. In other words, in Calvin’s theology, the meanings of the “union with Christ” thought have sometimes been dealt with as having an inter-relationship with the other theological themes or biblical texts, while at other times, its meanings are considered as being more self-evident.

The theological meanings of the “union with Christ” thought introduce many biblical texts and explain various theological themes, so that we can discern why this thought serves as a theological ‘principle’ throughout Calvin’s theology. Regarding the importance of researching the theological meaning of the “union with Christ” thought, Kevin D. Kennedy states:

There are several images which Calvin employs when he speaks of our union with Christ. The most frequently employed image in that of our being engrafted (*insero, insitio*) into Christ. Other common, though less frequent, images include communion (*communio, communico*); partaking (*participes*) of Christ; and growing together, or becoming one with Christ (*coalesce*). All of these images point to a single reality, a particular relationship between Christ and the believer. *Yet, it is still left to ascertain the exact meaning of union with Christ in Calvin’s theology. We must understand not only how we come to be united to Christ, but also what this union entails*² (own emphasis).

¹ For the different kinds of essential theological meanings of the “union with Christ” thought, see the ‘comprehensiveness of the various theological meaning’ in Chapter Four.

² Kevin Dixon Kennedy, *Union with Christ and the Extent of the Atonement in Calvin* (New York: Peter Lang, 2002), 116.

As Kennedy points out, few studies have systematically researched the theological meanings of “union with Christ.” Hence there is a lack of understanding about its comprehensiveness and central role in Calvin’s theology, which can be derived from examination of its representative theological meanings.

Campbell indicates that up to the present, in the Pauline canon ‘union with Christ’ is approached from two opposite methodological angles, namely theologically and interpretatively. The theological approach indicates “a broad theological concept that is used within a theological matrix of ideas and themes within the Pauline canon.” On the other hand, the interpretative approach “investigates union with Christ on a purely terminological basis, focusing on a Pauline formula.”³

It is important to understand these theological meanings of the “union with Christ” thought more precisely, as it is a ‘central key’ to a more convincing interpretation of Calvin’s theology and the concomitant biblical texts, for the thought features centrally in his theology and in the Scriptures. It would even be feasible to approach an analysis of the “union with Christ” thought as a previously researched task that has to be accomplished more exactly and comprehensively in today’s Reformed Theology.

In chapter four we examined the various metaphorical expressions of the “union with Christ” thought, while also attending briefly to the theological meanings of the thought illuminated by them. The central point of chapter four was to establish the comprehensiveness and the central role of the metaphorical expressions of the thought. In this part, I will set the focal point as an explanation of the theological meaning of the “union with Christ” thought. Failure to understand its theological meaning will distort the importance of its value. It becomes clear that Calvin was also aware of this potential risk, as emerges from a theological polemic with Osiander:

... yet he has clearly expressed himself as not content with that righteousness which has been acquired for us by Christ’s obedience and sacrificial death, but pretends that we are substantially righteous in God by the infusion both of his essence and of his quality... Then he throws in a mixture of substances by which God – transfusing himself into us, as it were – makes us part of himself. For the fact that it comes about through the power of the Holy Spirit that we grow together with Christ, and he becomes our Head and we his members, he reckons of almost no

³ Constantine R. Campbell, *Paul and Union with Christ: An Exegetical and Theological Study* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2012), 22-3.

importance of the Father and the Holy Spirit he more openly, as I have said, brings out what he means: namely, that we are not justified by the grace of the Mediator alone, nor is righteousness simply or completely offered to us in his person, but that we are made partakers in God's righteousness when God is united to us in essence.⁴

Where does Osiander's thought of the essential mixture between God and us originate? It is from the Scriptures, Jer. 51:10; 1 Co. 1:30; 2 Co. 5:21; Php. 2:13.⁵ "Union with Christ," as indicated in the Scriptures, had seriously been distorted in his theology because Osiander had misunderstood the thought's theological meaning. Do we understand the theological meaning of "union with Christ" thought today? And have its obvious theological meanings, together with its importance, been delivered correctly to us? Unfortunately, the "union with Christ" thought, which is central in Calvin's theology, has remained mostly at the theological margins.

The biblical theological meanings of the "union with Christ" thought have been revealed as a complex phase in Calvin's theology, because its theological meanings have the same feature and operate interchangeably; for example, the representative theological meaning of "union with Christ" is the "mystical union." This has an 'inter-close connection,' or an 'inter-indivisibility' with similar theological meanings of "union with Christ," as "spiritual union," 'union by the Holy Spirit,' and 'Trinitarian union.'

However, such interchangeable features affect the theological meanings of the thought, to the extent that they share a same 'inter-close connection' with the various theological themes and biblical texts. The decisive reason that the "union with Christ" thought acts as a central thought in Calvin's theology is deeply connected to its theological meanings, as will be discussed below with reference to various meanings.

5.1. The Union by the Holy Spirit

As mentioned earlier, the representative theological meaning of Calvin's "union with Christ" thought is "mystical union (*unio mystica*)," which cannot be explained except through the 'union by the Holy Spirit.' In Calvin's theology, this theological meaning of 'union by the Holy Spirit' has been treated together with and from almost every angle of

⁴ *Institutes*, 3.11.5.

⁵ *Institutes*, 3.11.8; 3.11.9; 3.11.12. For the serious theological error in Osiander's thought as 'the essential mixture between God and us,' see this Chapter's 'the essential union.'

research regarding the “union with Christ” thought, as also applies to the mystical union.⁶ From this point of view, it is right that this ‘union by the Holy Spirit’ is the most representative theological meaning in Calvin’s “union with Christ” thought. This ‘union by the Holy Spirit’ of the thought has contained some theological meanings, namely:

5.1.1. Transcendental Union

Firstly, ‘union by the Holy Spirit’ has a theological meaning that transcends spatial limitations. Although Christ, who ascended after the resurrection, has remained separate from us spatially, the Scriptures ceaselessly emphasize the present state of the union, in which Christ has united with us to become one. Jesus Christ himself emphasized this fact several times: *“I am going there to prepare a place for you ... On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you”* (Jn. 14:2, 20).

Since there is plainly a spatial disunity, how can such a practical union be possible? The answer also is in Jesus’ emphasis: *“I am going there to prepare a place for you ... And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever — the Spirit of truth... But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you... On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you”* (Jn. 14:2, 16-17, 20; cf. Jn. 15:26; 16:7-15). The mystical union which transcends the space between Christ and believers is possible only through this ‘union by the Holy Spirit.’

On the other hand, this theological notion of the “union with Christ” thought as ‘Christ in us’ (Jn. 15:5; Gal. 2:20; Col. 1:27, 1 Jn. 3:24), and as ‘we in Christ’ (Jn. 15:5; 1 Co. 15:22; 2 Co. 5:17) is one of the very intimate expressions in the New Testament.⁷ The “union with Christ” thought has been treated negligently in every age, resulting in many Christians’ misconception according to the more familiar un-biblical notion that Christ has remained outside of them, rather than the biblical notion that Christ dwells in them.⁸ Calvin frequently emphasizes ‘the present union with Christ and us,’ which transcends spatial limitations, through the ‘union by the Holy Spirit.’ His following statements attest to this fact:

⁶ *Institutes*, 1.7.4; 1.8.13; 1.13.14; 2.12.1; 2.2.16; 2.3.6; 2.3.8; 2.5.15; 3.1.1; 3.1.2; 3.1.3; 3.1.4; 3.2.12; 3.2.24; 3.2.33; 3.2.34; 3.2.35; 3.2.36; 3.2.39; 3.3.14; 3.3.19; 3.11.5; 3.11.12; 3.11.23; 3.14.9; 3.14.19; 3.16.5; 3.16.6; 3.17.5; 3.24.2; 4.1.2; 4.1.3; 4.14.9, 4.14.16; 4.15.6; 4.15.5; 4.15.6; 4.17.1, 4.17.10; 4.17.11, 4.17.12; 4.17.18; 4.17.28; 4.17.31; 4.17.33.

⁷ Bruce Demarest, *The Cross and Salvation: The Doctrine of Salvation* (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway Books, 2006), 319-21.

⁸ Augustus Herbert Strong, *Systematic Theology* (Valley Forge, Pennsylvania: Judson, 1907), 795.

*First, we must understand that as long as Christ remains outside of us, and we are separated from him, all that he has suffered and done for the salvation of the human race remains useless and of no value for us. Therefore, to share with us what he has received from the Father, he had to become ours and to dwell within us... It is true that we obtain this by faith. Yet since we see that not all indiscriminately embrace that communion with Christ which is offered through the gospel, *reason itself teaches us to climb higher and to examine into the secret energy of the Spirit, by which we come to enjoy Christ and all his benefits... To sum up, the Holy Spirit is the bond by which Christ effectually unites us to himself*⁹ (own emphasis).*

*For though he has taken his flesh away from us, and in the body has ascended into heaven, yet he sits at the right hand of the Father – that is, he reigns in the Father’s power and majesty and glory. This Kingdom is neither bounded by location in space nor circumscribed by any limits. Thus Christ is not prevented from exerting his power wherever he pleases, in heaven and on earth. He shows his presence in power and strength, is always among his own people, and breathes his life upon them, *and lives in them*, sustaining them, strengthening, quickening, keeping them unharmed, as if he were present in the body. In short, he feeds his people with his own body, *the communion of which he bestows upon them by the power of his Spirit*¹⁰ (own emphasis).*

These theological meanings of Calvin’s “union with Christ” thought as ‘the union by the Holy Spirit’ transcending spatial limitation, is not peculiar only to the *Institutes*, but recurs throughout his biblical commentaries. As an example, Calvin mentions dealing with ‘the subject of Acts’ in the introduction, even before he begins the commentary on Acts, as follows:

... although I omit now also those worthy praises which used most commonly to be attributed unto the sacred histories, intending only shortly to touch those which are proper to this book which we have taken in hand. Those things which Luke setteth before us in this place to be learned are not only great, but also of rare profit; for, first, in that he showeth that the Spirit of God was sent unto the apostles, he doth not only prove that Christ was faithful (and true) in keeping his promise made unto his apostles; but also he certifieth us, that he is always mindful of his, and a perpetual governor of his Church, *because the Holy Spirit did descend from heaven to this end; whereby we learn that the distance of place doth no whit hinder Christ from being present with those that be his at all time*. Now, here is most lively painted out the beginning of Christ’s kingdom, and as it were the renewing of the world...¹¹ (own emphasis).

⁹ *Institutes*, 3.1.1.

¹⁰ *Institutes*, 4.17.18. (cf. *Institutes*, 4.17.12; 4.17.28.)

¹¹ John Calvin, *Commentary upon The Acts of the Apostles*, vol. 1, ed. Henry Beveridge (Edinburgh:

In the same manner, by the ‘union by the Holy Spirit,’ the spatial distance between Christ and us is eliminated, so that Christ presently dwells, practically reigns, and continuously fills us with his life, not from outside but from inside of us. Calvin has emphasized this idea of Christ’s transcending space through the Holy Spirit, in his entire theology.

5.1.2. Union with the Holy Spirit

Secondly, ‘union with Christ and us as believers by the Holy Spirit’ also accentuates the theological meaning of ‘union with the Holy Spirit and us.’ In the New Testament and in Calvin’s theology, the notion of “union with Christ” appears frequently together with the ‘union with the Holy Spirit’ as if they are the same notion, being used often as interchangeable formulae. Donald Guthrie’s following statement insists on this fact:

The apostle never makes any significant distinction between the function of Christ and of the Spirit within the believer. The indwelling Christ is possible only through the indwelling Spirit.¹²

From this point of view, our ‘union with the Holy Spirit’ and “union with Christ” essentially have the same meaning. This fact is also confirmed by Calvin, as follows:

John explains this more clearly: “*We know that he abides in us from the Spirit whom he has given us*” (1 John 3:24). Likewise, “*From this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit*” (1 John 4:13)... Paul so highly commends the “ministry of the Spirit” (2 Cor. 3:7) for the reason that teachers would shout to no effect if Christ himself, inner Schoolmaster, did not by his Spirit draw to himself those given to him by the Father (cf. John 6:44; 12:32; 17:6)¹³ (own emphasis).

In the same manner, Calvin has repeatedly emphasized the biblical truth that we who have been united with Christ, have also been united with the Holy Spirit (Ro. 8:9-11; Eph. 2:22; 1 Jn. 3:24; 4:13). He therefore considers any distinction between ‘union with the Holy Spirit’ and “union with Christ,” that is imputing distinction between the Holy Spirit and

The Calvin Translation Society, 1844), 25-26.

¹² Donald Guthrie, *New Testament Theology* (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1985), 654.

¹³ *Institutes*, 3.1.4.

Christ, as very dangerous. Calvin's following statement which emphasizes this, articulates his warning in a definite manner:

Those in whom the Spirit reigns not, belong not to Christ... for they who separate Christ from his own Spirit make him like a dead image or a carcass. And we must always bear in mind what the Apostle has intimated, that gratuitous remission of sins can never be separated from the Spirit of regeneration; for this would be as it were to rend Christ asunder. If this be true, it is strange that we are accused of arrogance by the adversaries of the gospel, because we dare to avow that the Spirit of Christ dwells in us: for we must either deny Christ, or confess that we become Christians through his Spirit¹⁴ (own emphasis).

It is a mistake to imagine that the Spirit can be obtained without obtaining Christ: and it is equally foolish and absurd to dream that we can receive Christ without the Spirit. Both doctrines must be believed. We are partakers of the Holy Spirit, in proportion to the intercourse which we maintain with Christ; for the Spirit will be found nowhere but in Christ, on whom he is said, on that account, to have rested; for he himself says, by the prophet Isaiah, "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me." (Isa. lxi. 1; Luke iv. 18.) But neither can Christ be separated from his Spirit; for then he would be said to be dead, and to have lost all his power¹⁵ (own emphasis).

As Calvin's stressed, just like the Holy Spirit and Christ cannot be separated, our 'union with the Holy Spirit' and our "union with Christ" also have this indivisible connection, confirmed as a biblical truth. Without the 'union with the Holy Spirit' who dwells in us, 'every salvation' and 'benefits and graces of the new creation' that come from Christ will be worthless speculation. Fullness of the Holy Spirit (Eph. 5:18), every fruit of the Holy Spirit (Gal. 5:16-26), and every gift of the Holy Spirit (Eph. 4:1-16) are also the actual consequences of 'union with the Holy Spirit'.¹⁶ On the other hand, without Christ, who is the Mediator, our 'union with the Holy Spirit, who is his Spirit' is actually impossible.

To sum up, Calvin has interpreted the various theological themes and the various biblical texts not by speculative and abstract theology, but through a practical and dynamic theology, using the same theological meanings as 'union with Christ by the Holy Spirit' for us as believers; that is, 'union with the Holy Spirit and us' through the interchangeable formula.

¹⁴ *Comm.* on Ro. 8:9.

¹⁵ *Comm.* on Eph. 3:17.

¹⁶ *Institutes*, 1.13.14; John Calvin, *Sermons on Galatians*, trans. Kathy Childress (1563; repr., Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1997), 560.

5.2. Trinitarian Union

Another representative theological meaning of Calvin's "union with Christ" thought is 'Trinitarian union.' In the Scriptures and Calvin's theology, Trinitarian union means the actual union between the Triune God and us as believers. This 'Trinitarian union' also contains our 'union with the Holy Spirit' or our 'union with Christ by the Holy Spirit' mentioned before. In the strict meaning of the word, however, it has a more extensive theological meaning, namely that all three the Persons of the Trinity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, have actually been united with us.

Until now in Reformed Theology the theological meaning as 'the union with the Triune God and us,' which is suggested in "union with Christ" has not been explored as comprehensively as one would expect. Herman Bavinck's statement that herein "beats the heart of the whole revelation of God for the redemption of humanity" gives further impetus for such and undertaking. As the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, "our God is above us, before us, and within us."¹⁷

Bavinck's statement leads us to recognize anew the importance of Trinitarian thought in Christianity. Yet his statement fails to reveal the Trinitarian thought of the Scriptures exactly, for he has misunderstood that it is the Father who is "above us," the Son who is "before us," and the Holy Spirit who only ever actually existed "within us." In other words, in Christian recognition, it is a fact that such a statement will be more familiar than the notion that Christ and God remain outside of us, rather than the biblical notion of Christ and God dwelling within us, through the Holy Spirit.

But what do the Scriptures and Calvin's theology ceaselessly emphasize? It is that the Triune God, who, even though the three Persons are distinguished, cannot be divided; namely that God and Christ have been united with us through the Holy Spirit, who is Their Spirit (Jn. 14:16-20; 17:21; Ro. 8:9-11; 2 Co. 17-18; 1 Jn. 4:12-15). In a practical manner, this 'Trinitarian union' has been dealt with more comprehensively than any other theological meanings of the "union with Christ" thought in Calvin's entire theology.

5.2.1. 'Union with the One Person of the Triune God'

In more detail, in Calvin's theology this 'Trinitarian union' has been articulated as

¹⁷ Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics: God and Creation*, ed. John Bolt, trans. John Vriend (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker, 2004), 2: 260.

the following three formulae: Firstly, it is the unitary union formula that deals with ‘union with the one person of the Triune God’ and us. In other words, the unitary union has been dealt with individually, sometimes only as ‘union with the Holy Spirit’ and us, sometimes only as “union with Christ” and us, and also sometimes as “union with God” and us. Calvin’s following statements are representative examples of the unitary union formula (the Holy Spirit, Christ, God):

Behold, (St. Paul says), *God’s Spirit* has chosen us for his dwelling place (1 Cor. 3:17) (as it is said in another place that not only our souls, but also our bodies are the temples of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:19)) and *he delights to be in us and to remain there and to make it his permanent abode* (2 Cor. 6:16)¹⁸ (own emphasis.)

But, since the question concerns only righteousness and sanctification, let us dwell upon these. Although we may distinguish them, Christ contains both of them inseparably in himself. Do you wish, then, to attain righteousness in Christ? *You must first possess Christ*; but you cannot possess him without being made partaker in his sanctification, because he cannot be divided into pieces (1 Cor. 1:13)... Thus it is clear how true it is that we are justified not without works yet not through works, *since in our sharing in Christ*, which justifies us, sanctification is just as much included as righteousness¹⁹ (own emphasis).

From what foundation may righteousness better arise than from the Scriptural warning that we must be made holy because our God is holy? (Lev. 19:2; 1 Peter 1:15-16). Indeed, though we had been dispersed like stray sheep and scattered through the labyrinth of the world, *he (God) has gathered us together again to join us with himself. When we hear mention of our union with God*, let us remember that holiness must be its bond; not because we come into communion with him by virtue of our holiness! *Rather, we ought first to cleave unto him (God)* so that, infused with his holiness, we may follow thither he calls²⁰ (own emphasis).

These unitary union formulae of ‘Trinitarian union,’ more than anything else, have variously shown the most theological meanings in “union with Christ” thought. In other words, in Calvin’s theology, those unitary union formulae have been dealt with as not only the method of how Christ and believers unite, the union’s meaning, nature, result, benefit, and practical application, but have also been treated comprehensively as being connected to the

¹⁸ John Calvin, *Sermons on The Epistle to the Ephesians*, trans. Arthur Golding (1562; repr., Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1973), 472. (cf. *Institutes*, 2.3.6; 2.3.8.)

¹⁹ *Institutes*, 3.16.1.

²⁰ *Institutes*, 3.6.2.

various theological themes or biblical texts.

From the viewpoint of unitary union formulae, every metaphorical expression of Calvin's "union with Christ" thought refer to such a 'Trinitarian union.' In other words, it does not matter that 'Trinitarian union' is the core of the "union with Christ" thought, since without the theological meaning of 'Trinitarian union,' we would misunderstand the "union with Christ" thought. One reason that "union with Christ," the central thought of the Scriptures and Calvin, has remained dormant in our theology and belief, is the lack of understanding of its theological meaning as 'Trinitarian union.' In Calvin's theology such unitary union, dealing exclusively with 'the union with the one person of the Triune God' and us, does not outnumber the other complex union formulae.

5.2.2. 'Union with the Two Persons of the Triune God'

Secondly, the complex union formula deals with 'union with the two persons of the Triune God' and us. In some instances the complex union refers to 'union with the Holy Spirit and us' and 'union with Christ and us,' or alternatively sometimes it has dealt together with 'union with the Holy Spirit and us' and 'union with God and us,' and on other occasions it refers to 'union with Christ and us' and 'union with God and us' by the same formula. In the Scriptures and Calvin's theology, these complex unions that concern 'union with the two persons of the Triune God' and us, are the representative formulae, which have been treated relatively more comprehensively than the other union formulae of the "union with Christ" thought.

Calvin's following statements are representative examples of these complex union formulae (the Holy Spirit and Christ, the Holy Spirit and God, Christ and God):

And there is no need of this for us to enjoy a participation in it, since the Lord bestows this benefit upon us through his Spirit so that we may be made one in body, spirit, and soul with him. *The bond of this connection is therefore the Spirit of Christ, with whom we are joined in unity, and is like a channel through which all that Christ himself is and has is conveyed to us...On this account, Scripture, in speaking of our participation with Christ, relates its whole power to the Spirit.* But one passage will suffice for many. For Paul, in the eighth chapter of Romans, states that Christ dwells in us only through his Spirit (Rom. 8:9)²¹ (own emphasis).

²¹ *Institutes*, 4.17.12.

For the apostle does not teach that the grace of a good will is bestowed upon us if we accept it, *but that He (God) wills to work in us. This means nothing else than that the Lord by his Spirit directs, bends, and governs, our heart and reigns in it as in his own possession.* Indeed, he does not promise through Ezekiel that he will give a new Spirit to his elect only in order that they may be able to walk according to his precepts, but also that they may actually so walk (Ezek. 11:19-20; 36:27)²² (own emphasis).

*Believers have Christ abiding in them (1 John 3:24), through whom they may cleave to God; Sharers in his life, they sit with him in the heavenly places (Eph. 2:6); “They are translated into the Kingdom of God” (Col. 1:13 p.), and attain salvation — and innumerable like passages. For they do not mean that by faith in Christ there comes to us the capacity either to procure righteousness or only to acquire salvation, but that both are given to us. Therefore, as soon as you become engrafted into Christ through faith, you are made a son of God, and heir of heaven, a partaker in righteousness, a possessor of life; and (by this their falsehood may be better refuted) you obtain not the opportunity to gain merit but all the merits of Christ, for they are communicated to you*²³ (own emphasis).

In the Scriptures and Calvin’s theology, the “union with Christ” thought occurs in the complex union formula that treats this ‘union with the two persons of the Triune God’ and us. According to the classical doctrine of the Trinity,²⁴ the basic understanding of Calvin’s doctrine of the Trinity is that each person of Triune God is able to ‘be distinguished, but not separated.’²⁵ It is important that this doctrine of the Trinity be exposed directly in his ‘union with the Triune God and us’ thought.

Barker’s following statement makes an inference possible in some measure, namely that Calvin’s ‘union with the Triune God’ thought is deeply related to the understanding of the classical doctrine of the Trinity: “Calvin’s citations of the church fathers shows that he readily identified with the church of the fourth and fifth centuries as representing classical Christianity, 60 percent of his citations in the *Institutes* and his Commentaries coming from Western fathers between the Councils of Nicaea (A. D. 325) and Chalcedon (A. D. 451).” The doctrine of the Trinity in Christianity began to be formulated in those periods.²⁶

From this perspective, each person of the Triune God is distinguishable, but not

²² *Institutes*, 2.3.10.

²³ *Institutes*, 3.15.6.

²⁴ Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1976), 82-3. The Church began to formulate the doctrine of the Trinity from the Council of Nicea (325 A.D.) and the Council of Constantinople (381 A.D.).

²⁵ *Institutes*, 1.13.2; 1.13.6; 1.13.19; 1.13.25; 1.13.28.

²⁶ William S. Barker, “The Historical Context of the *Institutes* as a Work in Theology,” in *Theological Guide to Calvin’s Institutes: Essays and Analysis*, ed. David W. Hall and Peter A. Lillback (Phillipsburg, New Jersey: P&R Publishing, 2008), 6-7.

separable, and in the same way, the various expressions of ‘Trinitarian union’ can also be distinguished, but theologically they have same meaning. The various expressions of ‘union with the Holy Spirit, Christ, God’ and us as believers, each have individual distinct meanings, but they share the same meaning. The reason for the shared theological meaning in the Scriptures and in Calvin’s theology is that the “union with Christ” thought has been expressed most comprehensively by the complex union formula which deals with ‘union with the two persons of the Triune God’ and us by the interchangeable formula.

5.2.3. ‘Union with All Three Persons of the Triune God’

Thirdly, the complex union formula that deals with ‘union with all three persons of the Triune God’ and us, is to be found in Calvin’s ‘Trinitarian union.’ The most theological meaning of the “union with Christ” thought which features as a central motive in Calvin’s theology, is that ‘we are united with Christ and God through the Holy Spirit.’ Here it is important that union with the one person of the Triune God and us has the same meaning as ‘the union with all three persons of the Triune God’ and us.

For the Triune God is distinct but never separable. Furthermore, such a union formula becomes the decisive ground to emphasize the fact that as believers we have been united practically with all three persons of the Triune God. Calvin’s following polemical statement against Osiander, shows this clearly:

Although he (Osiander) may make the excuse that by the term “essential righteousness” he means nothing else but to meet the opinion that we are considered righteous for Christ’s sake, yet he has clearly expressed himself as not content with that righteousness which has been acquired for us by Christ’s obedience and sacrificial death, but pretends that we are substantially righteous in God by the infusion both of his essence and of his quality. *For this is the reason why he contends so vehemently that not only Christ but also the Father and the Holy Spirit, dwell in us. Although I admit this to be true, yet I say that it has been perversely twisted by Osiander; for he ought to have considered the manner of the indwelling — namely, that the Father and Spirit are in Christ, and even as the fullness of deity dwells in him (Col. 2:9), so in him we possess the whole of deity.* Therefore, all that he has put forward separately concerning the Father and the Spirit tends solely to seduce the simple-minded from Christ²⁷ (own emphasis).

²⁷ *Institutes*, 3.11.5. (cf. 1 Co. 1:2)

Here Calvin has plainly rejected Osiander's thought as a 'mixture with the essence of God and us,' but he certainly acknowledges the 'union with the Triune God' thought. Similarly we are beings who have been united practically as one with all three persons of the Trinity through the Holy Spirit. God, therefore, becomes 'our true God' who reigns, guides, leads, and participates with us not only by a transcendental formula from far outside of us, but also by the immanent formula in us. Hence in Calvin's theology, our Christian identity and almost every theological theme and the various biblical texts are treated as being dynamic by this viewpoint of 'Trinitarian union,' rather than merely as abstract forms.

Synthetically, every metaphorical expression of the "union with Christ" thought of the Scriptures and Calvin are included in the category of the 'union with the Triune God and us,' sometimes by the 'unitary Trinitarian union formula, at other times by the 'complex Trinitarian union formulae.' From this perspective, we should use this theological meaning as 'Trinitarian union,' when we interpret every metaphorical expression of "union with Christ" thought of the Scriptures and Calvin. Additionally, if seen from the viewpoint of the 'Trinitarian union,' eventually, the various analyses by theologians of Calvin's theology as being Pneumato-centric, Christo-centric, Triune God-centric, Pneumato-Triune God-centric, or Christo-Triune God-centric, are not all wrong assumptions.

On the other hand, the theological meaning of the "union with Christ" thought as 'Trinitarian union' is very dynamic and practical, because by the 'practical union with all three persons of the Triune God' and us, the new life of God is come within us as believers (Jn. 6:51-58; Ro. 6:4-5; 8:9-11; 1 Jn. 5:11-12).²⁸

5.3. Union through Faith

The other representative theological meaning of "union with Christ" is 'faith union.' What is 'faith union'? It means that as believers we are united with Christ through faith (Jn. 7:39; Eph. 2:6-10; 3:17). The notion of 'salvation through faith' is a very important truth of the Scriptures and the biblical notion has, eventually, assumed the same meaning as "union with Christ." In other words, 'union between Christ and us' is as important as 'union through faith,' which means that we can be united practically with Christ only through faith. This 'faith union' has become the other representative theological meaning in "union with Christ" thought.

²⁸ *Institutes*, 3.1.2; 3.8.7; 3.11.9; 3.11.12; 3.15.5; 3.22.6; 3.22.7; 4.15.15; 4.17.5; 4.17.10; 4.17.11; 4.17.18; 4.17.32; 4.17.33; 4.17.34.

Calvin explained the theological meaning of the “union with Christ” thought comprehensively and emphatically as this ‘faith union’ in his theology.²⁹ His following statements from the biblical commentary and the *Institutes* provide representative examples:

He that hath not the Son. This is a confirmation of the last sentence. It ought, indeed, to have been sufficient, that God made life to be in none but in Christ, that it might be sought in him; but lest any one should turn away to another, he excludes all from the hope of life who seek it not in Christ. *We know what it is to have Christ, for he is possessed by faith.* He then shews that all who are separated from the body of Christ are without life³⁰ (own emphasis).

It is our intention to make only these two points: first, that faith does not stand firm until a man attains to the freely given promise; second, that it does not reconcile us to God at all *unless it (faith) joins us to Christ...* Therefore, there can be no firm condition of faith unless it rests upon God’s mercy. Now, what is our purpose in discussing faith? Is it not that we may grasp the way of salvation? *But how can there be saving faith except in so far as it engrafts us in the body of Christ?*³¹ (own emphasis).

In the same manner, ‘faith union’ contributes significantly toward the “union with Christ” thought. In more detail, it contains the following important theological meanings of “union with Christ” thought:

5.3.1. The Original Direction of the Union

Firstly, the ‘faith union’ enables us to realize what the ‘original direction’ is that can make ‘union between us and Christ’ possible. In other words, the following two ‘sources of the original direction’ of the union are found in the “union with Christ” thought:

Firstly, there is the direction of ‘objective union.’ How can we, who are imperfect, unite with Christ, who is the perfect God? How can we, who are depraved creatures, unite with Christ, who is the Creator and the Saviour? It is only possible if Christ himself unites us with himself through the Holy Spirit. If seen from a paradoxical viewpoint, it means that we do not have a grain of the fundamental power that is needed to unite us with Christ, so that

²⁹ *Institutes*, 2.9.3; 2.16.14; 3.1.4; 3.2.1; 3.2.8; 3.2.14; 3.2.24; 3.2.30; 3.2.33; 3.2.34; 3.2.35; 3.2.36; 3.2.39; 3.11.1; 3.11.7; 3.11.13; 3.15.6; 3.16.1; 3.17.10; 3.17.11; 3.18.3; 4.6.10; 4.17.5; 4.17.11; 4.17.13; 4.17.34; *Comm.* on Jn. 7:39; 15:7; *Comm.* on Ac. 15:9; 16:31; *Comm.* on 1 Co. 11:24; *Comm.* on 2 Co. 5:21; *Comm.* on Gal. 2:20; *Comm.* on Eph. 2:8-9; 3:12, 17, 18; 5:11, 17; *Comm.* on Heb. 2:4; 5:9; *Comm.* on Jas. 2:14; *Comm.* on 1 Pe. 1:4; *Comm.* on 1 Jn. 2:3-6, 12; 3:10, 18-19, 23-24; 4:14-15; 5:11-12; *Serm.* on Eph. 1:17-18; 3:14-19.

³⁰ *Comm.* on 1 Jn. 5:12.

³¹ *Institutes*, 3.2.30.

“union with Christ” has to assume the direction ‘from Christ.’ This is the meaning of the direction of ‘objective union.’

Secondly, there is the direction of ‘subjective union.’ As believers, to accept Christ practically into our inner being, we need to have faith. As we receive salvation through faith, Scriptures proclaim that as believers we are united with Christ through this faith, without which the union would not be possible. Calvin has frequently emphasizes this thought of ‘union with Christ through our faith’ in his theology, as the following citation indicates:

May dwell through faith. The method by which so great a benefit is obtained is also expressed. What a remarkable commendation is here bestowed on faith, that, by means of it, the Son of God becomes our own, and “makes his abode with us!” (John xiv. 23.) By faith we not only acknowledge that Christ suffered and rose from the dead on our account, but, accepting the offers which he makes of himself, we possess and enjoy him as our Saviour. This deserves our careful attention. Most people consider fellowship with Christ, and believing in Christ, to be the same thing; but the fellowship which we have with Christ is the consequence of faith. In a word, faith is not a distant view, but a warm embrace, of Christ, by which he dwells in us, and we are filled with the Divine Spirit³²(own emphasis).

In the same manner, our ‘union with Christ through faith,’ implies that the direction is ‘from us,’ that is, ‘subjective union.’ In summary, in the theological meaning of ‘faith union’ in the “union with Christ” thought contains both the direction of ‘objective union’ as ‘from Christ’ by the Holy Spirit, and the direction of ‘subjective union’ as ‘from us’ through faith.

5.3.2. The Initiative of Union

Secondly, ‘faith union’ causes us to recognize ‘the initiative of union’ (or ‘the sovereignty of union’) that underpins the “union with Christ” thought. As believers we have been united with our Lord Christ objectively by the Holy Spirit, subjectively through faith. Without these two objective-subjective union formulae, therefore, the “union with Christ” thought cannot be explained clearly.

Nevertheless, the subjective union formula through our faith is influenced by the objective union formula, because it is the biblical teaching that our ‘faith’ arises not from our

³² *Comm.* on Eph. 3:17.

meritorious works, but is “the gift of God” and is ‘the result of the work of the Holy Spirit’ (Eph. 2:5-8, 3:16-17). In the same manner, in “faith is the principal work of the Holy Spirit,”³³ “only the Holy Spirit leads us to Christ,”³⁴ and “without the Spirit man is incapable of faith,”³⁵ the initiative of union belongs to the Triune God. ‘The sovereignty of God’s grace’ is revealed clearly in Calvin’s “union with Christ” thought, more than in any other aspect of his entire theology.³⁶

Various theologians have remarked on the frequent emphasis on the idea of God’s sovereignty. The following books have emphasized that God’s sovereignty is the central doctrine of Calvin’s theology, or introduced that fact: B. B. Warfield, *Calvin as a Theologian and Calvinism Today* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Evangelical Press, 1970); Louis Berkhof, *Introduction to Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1979), 80; A. N. Martin, *The Practical Implications of Calvinism* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1974), 4; Charles Partee, *The Theology of John Calvin* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2008), 2, 297; Philip Graham Ryken, *What is a True Calvinist: Basics of the Reformed Faith* (Phillipsburg, New Jersey: P&R Publishing, 2003), 7.

More recently, the tendency has been to refuse the insistence that God’s sovereignty is the central doctrine of Calvin’s theology. For such contradictions see the following: Carl R. Trueman, “Calvin and Reformed Orthodoxy,” in *The Calvin Handbook*, ed. Herman J. Selderhuis, trans. Judith J. Guder, Henry J. Baron, Randi H. Lundell, and Gerrit W. Sheeres (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 473; Richard A. Muller, *The Unaccommodated Calvin: Studies in the Foundation of a Theological Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 3.

The idea of God’s sovereignty is revealed most clearly in the ‘faith union’ that is the theological meaning of Calvin’s “union with Christ.” Calvin emphasizes that as believers we are able to accomplish the mystical union with Christ both through the Holy Spirit and faith, but he emphasizes repeatedly that the initiative in the union is not ours, but belongs completely to God, according to biblical teaching. This fact is stressed in Calvin’s following statements:

But faith is the principal work of the Holy Spirit. Consequently, the terms

³³ *Institutes*, 3.1.4.

³⁴ *Institutes*, 3.2.34.

³⁵ *Institutes*, 3.2.35.

³⁶ Philip Graham Ryken, “The Believer’s Union with Christ,” in *John Calvin: A Heart for Devotion Doctrine & Doxology*, ed. Burk Parsons (Lake Mary, Florida: Reformation Trust Publishing, 2008), 195-6.

commonly employed to express his power and working are, in large measure, referred to it because by faith alone he leads us into the light of the gospel, as John teaches... Contrasting God with flesh and blood, *he declares it to be a supernatural gift that those who would otherwise remain in unbelief receive Christ by faith... Paul shows the Spirit to be the inner teacher* by whose effort the promise of salvation penetrates into our minds, a promise that would otherwise only strike the air or beat upon our ears. Similarly, where he says that the Thessalonians have been chosen by God “in sanctification of the Spirit and belief in the truth” (2 Thess. 2:13), *he is briefly warning us that faith itself has no other source than the Spirit...* For light would be given the sightless in vain had that Spirit of discernment (Job 20:3) not opened the eyes of the mind. Consequently, he may rightly be called the key that unlocks for us the treasures of the Kingdom of Heaven (cf. Rev. 3:7); and his illumination, the keenness of our insight... Accordingly, that we may become partakers of it “he baptizes us in the Holy Spirit and fire” (Like 3:16), *bringing us into the light of faith in his gospel and so regenerating us that we become new creatures* (cf. 2 Cor. 5:17)³⁷ (own emphasis).

Let it suffice that Paul calls faith itself, which the Spirit gives us but which we do not have by nature, “the spirit of faith” (2 Cor. 4:13)... Thus he denies that man himself initiates faith, and not satisfied with this, he adds that it is a manifestation of God’s power. In the letter to the Corinthians he states that faith does not depend upon men’s wisdom, but is founded upon the might of the Spirit (1 Cor. 2:4-5)... In another passage he (Augustine) says: “Why is it given to one and not to another? I am not ashamed to say: ‘This is the depth of the cross. ‘Out of some depth or other of God’s judgments, which we cannot fathom ... comes forth all that we can do... I see what I can do; I do not see whence I can do it – except that I see this far: that... it is of God. But why one and not the other? This means much to me. It is an abyss, the depth of the cross. I can exclaim in wonder; I cannot demonstrate it through disputation.” *To sum up: Christ, when he illumines us into faith by the power of his Spirit, at the same time so engrafts us into his body that we become partakers of every good*³⁸ (own emphasis).

In the same manner, ‘faith union,’ in which we are united subjectively with Christ through faith, implies that the initiative still belongs to God, who has the power to make possible the objective union.

In summary, the theological meaning of “union with Christ” thought as ‘faith union’ is found in its direction, which indicates that as believers we are united with Christ, objectively by the Holy Spirit, subjectively through faith. Another theological meaning concerns the initiative for the union. For Calvin, the certainty of our faith arises from the

³⁷ *Institutes*, 3.1.4.

³⁸ *Institutes*, 3.2.35.

“works of the Holy Spirit,”³⁹ and because our meritorious works do not contribute anything to faith’s original source,⁴⁰ the initiative is completely God’s.⁴¹ Therefore, as salvation is bestowed completely by God’s grace, the grounds on which we, who have nothing to qualify us, can unite with Christ, is completely from the infinite grace of Christ. Hence the sovereignty of the union does not belong to us, but absolutely to Christ.

Nevertheless, faith features importantly in the following meaning: “Faith, then, brings a man empty to God, that he may be filled with the blessings of Christ.”⁴² From this point of view, ‘faith union’ is ‘*central key to the Gospel*,’ which shows that we can unite perfectly with Christ in the indivisible relationship between the Holy Spirit and faith. To enable us to receive the abundant benefit of “union with Christ” day after day, therefore, we must concentrate on Christ who creates our faith, renews us, and is always uniting with us by the Holy Spirit.

5.4. Substantial Union (as a more comprehensive term)

As I have emphasized, there are obvious grounds to insist that “union with Christ” is a central thought, or a theological principle in Calvin’s theology. Not only does it recur throughout Calvin’s entire theology in more than 150 metaphorical expressions, but it also reveals a theological function in the structural aspect (in the *Institutes*), and has been shown to have a connection with ‘the various theological themes’ or ‘the various biblical texts.’ It also recurs with frequency and over an expansive scope. It reverberates through various biblical and ‘theological meanings’ found as metaphorical expressions for “union with Christ.” Additionally, those theological meanings serve to explain further the various theological themes and many biblical texts. The theological impact of these meanings proves that “union with Christ” is a central thought of Calvin’s theology.

The theological meanings have been shown to be connected closely to the various theological themes in his theology – an aspect which has remained insufficiently explored until now. The latter fact has had the consequence that this aspect of Calvin’s theology has continually been misunderstood. The representative example is the ‘theological deficiency’ in

³⁹ *Comm.* on Eph. 3:18.

⁴⁰ *Comm.* on Eph. 2:8-9.

⁴¹ *Institutes*, 2.3.6; 2.3.8; 2.3.9; 2.3.10; 2.3.11; 3.2.35; 3.2.39; 3.6.2; 3.11.7; 3.11.8; 3.11.9; 3.11.23; 3.15.5; 3.15.6; 3.16.1; 4.6.9; 4.16.31; 4.17.12; 4.17.30; 4.17.31; *Comm.* on Jn. 7:39; 12:45; 8:19; 15:7; *Comm.* on Ac. 15: 9; 16:31; *Comm.* on Gal. 2:20; *Comm.* on Eph. 5:31; *Comm.* on Heb. 5:9; *Comm.* on 1 Jn. 4:15.

⁴² *Comm.* on Eph. 2:8-9.

the examination of the core thought only in its doctrinal aspect, rather than as a theological thought or principle.

Since Calvin, almost every theologian who treated “union with Christ” dealt with the thought mostly as a doctrine subordinated to soteriology and the doctrine of the sacrament, and only more recently has “union with Christ” been proposed as a central theological thought, principle, theme, motif, or methodology in Calvin’s theology.⁴³ Otherwise, research honoring “union with Christ” as an important Scriptural notion has also been attempted,⁴⁴ but these attempts fail to deliver a satisfactory level because in almost every case, Calvin’s “union with Christ” thought suffers from ‘theological deflection,’ shelving the thought as a doctrine that belongs to soteriology. Yet the notion of “union with Christ” should not be limited to the forensic understanding of justification, although it should of course also not be dislocated from it. Michael S. Horton’s writes:

Calvin’s undeniable interest in union with Christ buttresses rather than undermines his exclusively forensic understanding of justification. *Union with Christ is certainly the broader category in Calvin’s thinking that encompasses justification and sanctification* (as well as election and glorification). However, the breadth of this motif in no way makes justification a secondary doctrine in Calvin’s soteriology. *Calvin regarded justification as “the primary article of the Christian religion,” “the main hinge on which religion turns,” “the principal article of the whole doctrine of salvation and the foundation of all religion”*⁴⁵ (own emphasis).

Moreover, in Calvin’s theological works as quoted by Horton, the emphasis is not only on justification, but more exactly, on “union with Christ” that contains justification.⁴⁶

⁴³ Charles Partee, “Calvin’s Central Dogma Again,” in *The Organizational Structure of Calvin’s Theology*, Vols. 7, ed. Richard C. Gamble (New York: Garland Publishing, INC., 1992); William B. Evans, *Imputation and Impartation: Union with Christ in American Reformed Theology* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock, 2008); J. Todd Billings, *Union with Christ: Reframing Theology and Ministry for the Church* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2011); Mark A. Garcia, *Life in Christ: Union with Christ and Twofold Grace in Calvin’s Theology* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock, 2008); Michael Horton, *Covenant and Salvation : Union with Christ* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2007); Kevin Dixon Kennedy, *Union with Christ and the Extent of the Atonement in Calvin* (New York: Peter Lang, 2002).

⁴⁴ Constantine R. Campbell, *Paul and Union with Christ*; N. T. Wright, *Justification: God’s Plan and Paul’s Vision* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Academic, 2009); Michael J. Gorman, *Inhabiting the Cruciform God: Kenosis, Justification, and Theosis in Paul’s Narrative Soteriology* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009); Richard N. Longenecker, *Galatians*, Word Biblical Commentary 41 (Dallas: Word, 2002).

⁴⁵ Michael S. Horton, “Calvin’s Theology of Union with Christ and the Double Grace: Modern Reception and Contemporary Possibilities,” in *Calvin’s Theology and Its Reception: Disputes, Developments, and New Possibilities*, ed. J. Todd Billings and I. John Hesselink (Louisville, Kentucky: John Knox Press, 2012), 88.

⁴⁶ Calvin’s theological works that Horton cited directly are *Institutes*, 3.2.1; 3.11.1; *Serm.* on Luke 1:5-10; CR, 46.23. If the quoted passages are seen from the viewpoint of whole context, the emphasis of Calvin

Horton interprets Calvin's "union with Christ" thought and its theological significance excellently, but does not deal extensively with the theological limitation of dealing with the thought only as a doctrine within soteriology.⁴⁷

The cause of the theological deficit, in which "union with Christ" has been treated only as a doctrine and not as a thought, is also aligned with the insufficient understanding of its 'theological meanings.' From this point of view, the detailed research on the 'theological meanings' of the thought demand theological analysis in order to understand Calvin's theology and the Scriptures, with due consideration of the theological meanings and their inter-connection with the other theological themes and biblical texts.

On the other hand, as I have emphasized, the theological meanings of this thought also have an 'interchangeability feature' in themselves. For example, the other meanings of 'organic union,' 'eschatological union,' and 'covenantal union' have been treated together with the theological meaning, as 'substantial union,' having a close interconnection or inter-indivisibility.' Additionally, the theological meanings of the thought have also been comprehensively dealt with as having numerous meanings in Calvin's theology.

Substantial union is a representative 'theological meaning' of "union with Christ" thought. If seen from the more comprehensive viewpoint, what is the substantial union? It means that we accomplish the mystical union by the Holy Spirit substantially, and essentially as 'we in Christ' or as 'Christ in us' (Jn. 15:5; 1 Co. 6:15-19; Eph. 1:22-23; 4:15-16; 5:29-30; 1 Jn. 3:24; 4:13), rather than viewing 'the union with Christ and us' as merely an abstract speculation.

On the other hand, the theological meanings of "union with Christ" can be divided formulaically into 'spiritual union' and 'substantial union.' In other words, our union with Christ is a 'spiritual union' through the Holy Spirit and faith, but on the other hand, it is also a 'real union' accomplished by Christ virtually granting us his substance. Calvin emphasizes this reality by frequently using words such as 'real,' 'substance,' and 'essence,' as well as by the metaphorical expressions that contain its meaning.⁴⁸

is obviously not justification, but "union with Christ" that includes justification.

⁴⁷ Michael S. Horton, *The Christian Faith: A Systematic Theology for Pilgrims on the Way* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2011), 296; idem, "The Principal Article of Salvation," in *John Calvin: A Heart for Devotion Doctrine & Doxology*, ed. Burk Parsons (Lake Mary, Florida: Reformation Trust Publishing, 2008), 201-20; idem, *Covenant and Salvation*, 127-52; idem, "Calvin's Theology of Union with Christ and the Double Grace: Modern Reception and Contemporary Possibilities," 72-94.

⁴⁸ *Institutes*, 2.12.7; 2.13.2; 2.16.16; 2.17.1; 3.1.1; 3.1.2; 3.1.3; 3.2.24; 3.8.1; 3.9.5; 3.9.6; 3.11.5; 3.11.10; 3.11.21; 3.16.2; 3.17.11; 3.18.3; 3.20.19; 3.21.7; 3.25.10; 4.1.2; 4.1.3; 4.2.6; 4.3.2; 4.6.10; 4.6.17; 4.7.21; 4.14.7; 4.14.15; 4.15.16; 4.15.22; 4.16.22; 4.17.2; 4.17.4; 4.17.5; 4.17.6; 4.17.9; 4.17.10; 4.17.11; 4.17.12; 4.17.14; 4.17.15; 4.17.16; 4.17.19; 4.17.20; 4.17.21; 4.17.24; 4.17.33; 4.17.34; 4.17.38; 4.18.10;

Nevertheless, the two theological meanings of ‘spiritual union’ and ‘substantial union’ of the thought are related, because spiritual union, besides substantial union with Christ, should be dismissed as a speculative thought, while on the contrary, substantial union, besides spiritual union, would become pantheism.⁴⁹ Calvin theological connection between spiritual union and substantial union emerges clearly in the following statement:

The nature and reality of this “mystical union” of the Church with Christ in human nature or flesh Calvin regards as one of the great mysteries of the Gospel. It is a real and substantial union by which believers living “out of themselves” thus live in Christ. By mean of it Christ becomes “of one substance” with us and we become “bone of His bone and flesh of His flesh.” Yet it is ant the same time essentially a spiritual union effected by the power of the Holy Ghost in such a way that there is no “gross mixture” of Christ and ourselves. Moreover this union is effected by faith alone and cannot be experienced apart from faith⁵⁰ (own emphasis).

In the same manner, the theological meaning of substantial union of “union with Christ” thought cannot be explained completely by excluding the circumstances of the meanings of spiritual union and its opposition. By this complex union formula, the following theological meanings, similar but also distinct, are included in the ‘substantial union’ of the “union with Christ” thought:

5.4.1. Real Union

Firstly, the theological meaning of ‘real union’ is included; this signifies that Christ’s substance unites with us ‘really as one.’ As mentioned before, the “union with Christ” thought cannot be explained without the theological meanings of spiritual union,⁵¹ faith union, epistemological union,⁵² and internal union.⁵³ Otherwise, Christ, who stays at the right side of God, cannot accomplish the mystical union with us, transcending the spatial

4.19.25; 4.19.36; Jean Calvin, *Calvin: Commentaries*, trans. Joseph Haroutunian, ed. Louise Pettibone Smith (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1958), 208; *Comm.* on 1 Co. 11:24; *Comm.* on Eph. 5:30; *Comm.* on Jas. 2:14.

⁴⁹ Pantheism is the idea of becoming one, mingling God’s reality into all beings of creation.

⁵⁰ Ronald S. Wallace, *Calvin’s Doctrine of the Christian Life* (Tyler, TX: Geneva Divinity School Press, 1982), 18. Calvin’s theological works which Wallace quoted in this statement are as the following. *Institutes*, 3.1.3; 3.11.10; 4.17.3; *Comm.* on 1 Co. 11:24; *Comm.* on Gal. 2:20; *Comm.* on Heb. 5:9.

⁵¹ *Comm.* on 1 Co. 6:15; *Comm.* on Ro. 6:5; *Comm.* on Eph. 5:31; *Institutes*, 2.9.3; 2.12.7; 2.13.2; 2.16.14; 3.1.1; 3.1.2; 3.1.4; 3.2.1; 3.2.8; 3.2.12; 3.2.33; 3.2.34; 3.2.35; 3.2.36; 3.2.39; 3.11.5; 3.11.12; 3.14.9; 3.14.19; 3.17.5; 4.1.2; 4.14.16; 4.15.6; 4.17.3; 4.17.8; 4.17.10; 4.17.12; 4.17.15; 4.17.16; 4.17.20; 4.17.26; 4.17.28; 4.17.31; 4.17.32; 4.17.33; 4.17.34.

⁵² *Institutes*, 2.3.6; 3.1.4; 3.2.1; 3.2.8; 3.11.12; 4.17.5; 4.17.6; 4.17.11.

⁵³ *Institutes*, 3.23.14; 4.17.10.

distance.

Nevertheless, if we do not treat the real union together with Christ's substance and us, while also dealing with such theological meanings, this substantial notion should be demoted to a mere abstract symbol or speculative thought. This theological meaning of real union of Calvin's "union with Christ" thought is shown in the following citations from his ninth sermon about the Passion of Jesus Christ, and his commentary of Ephesians:

In this sense, let us know the unity that we have a common life with us, and that what he has should be ours: nay, that he even wishes to dwell in us, *not in imagination, but in effect*; not in earthly fashion but spiritually; and that whatever may befall, he so labours by the virtue of his Holy Spirit that *we are united with him more closely than are the limbs with the body*⁵⁴ (own emphasis).

This is an exact quotation from the writings of Moses (Gen. 2: 24). And what does it mean? As Eve was formed out of the substance of her husband, and thus was a part of himself; *so, if we are the true members of Christ, we share his substance, and by this inter-course unite into one body*⁵⁵ (own emphasis).

In the same manner, the union between Christ's substance and ours posits that it is not merely our imagination or a mere symbol, but a virtual vivid occurrence that is accomplished by the Holy Spirit and faith. From this point of view, real union has the theological meaning that Christ reigns 'in us,' 'relating to us.' Christ's reign in us as believers, therefore, is closely related to 'the Kingdom of God' or 'the Kingdom of Christ' (Lk. 17:21; Ro. 14:17), for the Kingdom of God is not merely a regional or territorial notion but a dynamic notion; the kingdom in which God reigns is the Kingdom of God. Therefore Christ's practical reign in us as believers means that the Kingdom of God has already been begun in us. Calvin's following statements clearly indicate this fact:

But as we have just now pointed out that this kind of government is distinct from that *spiritual and inward Kingdom of Christ*, so we must know that they are not at variance. *For spiritual government, indeed, is already initiating in us upon earth certain beginnings of the Heavenly Kingdom*, and in this mortal and fleeting life affords a certain forecast of an immortal and incorruptible blessedness⁵⁶ (own emphasis).

⁵⁴ OS.46: 953. It is quoted from François Wendel, *Calvin: The Origins and Development of His Religious Thought*, trans. Philip Mairet (London: Collins, 1963), 235.

⁵⁵ *Comm.* on Eph. 5:31.

⁵⁶ *Institutes*, 4.20.2.

There is no impropriety in saying that we have already *passed from death to life; for the incorruptible seed of life (1 Pet. 1:23) resides in the children of God, and they already sit in the heavenly glory with Christ by hope, (Col. 3:3), and they have the kingdom of God already established within them, (Luke 17: 21)*. For though their *life be hidden*, they do not on that account cease to possess it by faith; and though they are besieged on every side by faith, they do not cease to be calm on this account, that they know that they are in perfect safety through the protection of Christ. Yet let us remember that believers are now in life in such a manner that they always carry about with them the cause of death; but the Spirit, who dwells in us, is *life*, which will at length destroy the remains of *death*; for it is a true saying of Paul, that *death is the last enemy that shall be destroyed*, (1 Cor. 15:26)... and we need not wonder at this, since they are united to him who is the inexhaustible fountain of life⁵⁷ (own emphasis).

Calvin has emphasized that Christ actually reigns in us as believers, using the phrase the ‘Kingdom of God’⁵⁸ simultaneously with the ‘Kingdom of Christ.’⁵⁹

5.4.1.1. Eschatological Union

This means that real union includes the theological meaning of ‘eschatological union,’⁶⁰ for the ‘Kingdom of Christ,’ which will be perfectly completed on the second coming of the Lord, has already begun and Christ Himself, who has been united with us, reigns in us.

The Kingdom of God, nevertheless, is “not yet” completed. From this point of view, Calvin emphasizes that the holiness, sanctification, purity, hope, eternal life, and resurrection have “already” been begun in us by Christ’s real union and reign, but are “not yet” complete.⁶¹ His following statements explain this:

In a word, Christ did not ascend to heaven in a private capacity, to dwell

⁵⁷ *Comm.* on Jn. 5:24.

⁵⁸ *Serm.* on Acts 1:1-4; *Comm.* on Hos. 11:1; *Comm.* on Isa. 43:19; *Comm.* on Ezek. 17:22; *Comm.* on Luke 17:20; *Institutes*, 2.9.4; 2.15.4; 2.15.5; 2.16.16; 3.2.1; 3.3.19; 3.8.7; 3.17.6; 3.20.42; 3.22.6; 4.3.4; 4.16.17; 4.19.6; 4.19.7; 4.20.2.

⁵⁹ *Institutes*, 2.15.3; 2.16.19; 3.1.2; 3.15.6; 3.24.5; 4.3.4; 4.17.32; 4.18.4; 4.18.17; 4.18.20; 4.19.6; 4.19.25; 4.20.12.

⁶⁰ *Comm.* on Isa. 26:19; *Institutes*, 2.15.5; 3.2.24; 3.11.11; 3.25.2; 3.25.3; 4.17.29.

⁶¹ The eschatological theological language “already but not yet” is emphasized in the Scriptures and Calvin’s theology. For Calvin’s understanding from the viewpoint of the “union with Christ” thought, see the following in his own theological works, including the above references about ‘the kingdom of God’ and ‘the eschatological union’: *Institutes*, 2.12.3; 3.15.5; 3.25.2; 4.8.12; 4.20.2; *Comm.* on Ro. 6:6; *Comm.* on Jn. 14:2; *Comm.* on 2 Ti. 2:8.

there alone, but rather that it might be the common inheritance of all the godly, *and that in this way the Head might be united to his members...* This *place* is said to be *prepared* for the day of the resurrection; for by nature mankind are banished from the kingdom of God, but the Son, who is the only heir of heaven, took possession of it in their name, that through him we may be permitted to enter; *for in his person we already possess heaven by hope, as Paul informs us (Eph. 1:3). Still we will not enjoy this great blessing, until he come from heaven the second time*⁶² (own emphasis).

In his Epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians (Eph. 1:4, and Col. 1:22) he teaches that this is the end of our calling – that we may appear pure and unrepachable in the presence of Christ. It is, however, to be observed, *that this glorious purity is not in the first instance perfected in us; nay, rather, it goes well with us if we are every day making progress in penitence, and are being purged from the sins (2 Peter 1:9) that expose us to the displeasure of God, until at length we put off, along with the mortal body, all the offscourings of sin*⁶³ (own emphasis).

Similarly the eschatological meaning of “already but not yet” is contained in the theological meaning of the real union between Christ’s substance and us as believers, creating a dynamic tension in which we strain between the “already” and the “not yet.” We have to recognize that we are the ones called as serviceable instruments for the work that extends the kingdom of Christ and that has already begun in us, into the world outside us. This is only possible by the Holy Spirit who has really united us with Christ.

5.4.1.2. Effective Union

‘Real union’ has the theological meaning that every benefit of Christ might become ours: union between Christ’s substance and believers includes the theological meaning of ‘effective union’ (Eph. 1:14), because all Christ’s benefits become ours by the virtual union between Christ’s substance and ours through the Holy Spirit. Similarly, Calvin emphasizes that “the Holy Spirit is the bond by which Christ *effectually unites* us to himself.”⁶⁴

Similarly Calvin frequently emphasizes the benefits of the union through the real union with Christ, that all Christ’s “benefits,” “blessings,” “every sort of happiness,” “eternal blessedness,” namely, Christ’s “all things” become ours.⁶⁵ We have been given a promise by

⁶² *Comm.* on Jn. 14:2.

⁶³ *Comm.* on 1 Co. 1:8.

⁶⁴ *Institutes*, 3.1.1.

⁶⁵ *Institutes*, 3.2.24; 3.25.10; 4.1.1; 4.15.6.

faith of ‘all things of Christ,’ that is, ‘the benefit of eternal life,’ through real and effective union with Christ’s substance, as is indicated in the following statement:

Indeed, he states that “he has chosen us in him” from eternity “before the foundation of the world,” through no merit of our own “but according to the purpose of divine good pleasure” (Eph. 1:4-5, cf. Vg)...*that thus ingrafted into him (cf. Rom. 11:29) we are already, in a manner, partakers of eternal life*, having entered in the Kingdom of God through hope. Yet more: we experience such participation in him that, although we are still foolish in ourselves, he is our wisdom before God; while we are sinners, he is our righteousness; while we are unclean, he is our purity; while we are weak, while we are unarmed and exposed to Satan, yet ours is that power which has been given him in heaven and on earth (Matt. 28:18), by which to crush Satan for us and shatter the gates of hell; while we still bear about with us the body of death, he is yet our life. *In brief, because all his things are ours and we have all things in him, in us there is nothing*⁶⁶ (own emphasis).

All the benefits of Christ that we will be given, therefore, are on the thin line between the “already” and the “not yet” by the real substantial union with Christ, for we have “already” been given these benefits by the Holy Spirit and faith, but they have “not yet” been perfected.

5.4.1.3. Covenantal Union

Another theological meaning which arises in Calvin’s ‘real union’ is ‘covenantal union’ (Eph. 2:6; Col 1:13), because by the promise, we have “already” been given all the benefits and blessings; and it is rendered ‘covenantal’ in the sense that these things have “not yet” been perfected.⁶⁷

As believers we have received many benefits that belong to the Triune God, accomplished “already” by the real union with Christ’s substance, for example, regeneration,

⁶⁶ *Institutes*, 3.15.5.

⁶⁷ On the other hand, ‘covenantal union’ also has the same meaning from the aspect of the fulfillment of the promise by Christ’s comings and union, which the old prophets prophesied. For ‘covenantal union,’ see the following: Peter A. Lillback, “Calvin’s Interpretation of the History of Salvation: The Continuity and Discontinuity of the Covenant (2.10-11),” in *Theological Guide To Calvin’s Institutes: Essays and Analysis*, ed. David W. Hall and Peter A. Lillback (Phillipsburg, New Jersey: P&R Publishing, 2008), 168-204; Michael S. Horton, *Covenant and Salvation*, 127-215. Furthermore, for the ground source of Calvin’s ‘covenantal union’ thought, see his own books: John Calvin, *Sermons on the Ten Commandments*, ed. and trans. Benjamin W. Farley (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker, 1980), 45; *Comm. on Ge. 17:9*; *Comm. on Ex. 6:5*; *Comm. on Ps. 132:12*; *Comm. on Isa. 37:23*; 55:3; *Comm. on Jer. 14:22*; 33:8; *Comm. on Hag. 2:1-5*; *Comm. on Mal. 2:4*; *Institutes*, 3.1.1; 3.6.2; 3.14.8; 3.17.5; 3.17.6; 3.21.1; 3.21.5; 3.21.7; 3.24.1; 4.1.20; 4.13.6.

repentance, justification, and so forth. In the aspect of those benefits, the “union with Christ” thought gains the theological meaning of ‘covenantal union.’ Calvin’s following statements show this meaning as contained in “union with Christ” thought:

It hence follows, that as long as we are children of Adam, and nothing more than men, we are so in bondage to sin, that we can do nothing else but sin; *but that being grafted in Christ, we are delivered from this miserable thralldom; not that we immediately cease entirely to sin, but that we become at last victorious in the contest*⁶⁸ (own emphasis).

Believers have Christ abiding in them (1 John 3:24), through whom they may cleave to God; Sharers in his life, *they sit with him in the heavenly places (Eph. 2:6); “They are translated into the Kingdom of God” (Col. 1:13 p.), and attain salvation...Therefore, as soon as you become engrafted into Christ through faith, you are made a son of God, and heir of heaven, a partaker in righteousness, a possessor of life*⁶⁹ (own emphasis).

And certainly, although, as respects ourselves, our salvation is still the object of hope, yet in Christ we already possess a blessed immortality and glory; and therefore, he adds, in Christ Jesus. Hitherto it does not appear in the members, but only in the head; yet, in consequence of the secret union, it belongs truly to the members. Some render it, *through Christ*; but, for the reason which has been mentioned, it is better to retain, the usual rendering, *in Christ. We are thus furnished with the richest consolation. Of everything which we now want, we have a sure pledge and foretaste in the person of Christ*⁷⁰ (own emphasis).

5.4.1.4. Union and the offices of Christ

On the other hand, ‘real union’ contains the theological meaning that the offices of Christ are entrusted to us (1 Pe. 2:9; Rev. 1:6; 5:10). ‘The commission thought of the offices of Christ’ is a peculiar feature that is discovered in Calvin’s theology.⁷¹ From this point of view, real union between Christ’s substance and us as believers assumes the theological meaning of

⁶⁸ *Comm. on Ro. 6:6.*

⁶⁹ *Institutes*, 3.15.6. This statement of Calvin is already quoted in this Chapter’s footnote no. 23, I re-quote some of this from the viewpoint of ‘covenantal union.’

⁷⁰ *Comm. on Eph. 2:6.*

⁷¹ Matthias Freudenberg, “Catechisms,” in *The Calvin Handbook*, ed. Herman J. Selderhuis, trans. Judith J. Guder, Henry J. Baron, Randi H. Lundell, and Gerrit W. Sheeres (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 210; J. Todd Billings, *Union with Christ*, 161; Charles Partee, *The Theology of John Calvin*, 166, 174; Dennis E. Tamburello, *Union with Christ: John Calvin and the Mysticism of St. Bernard* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1994), 86; Robert A. Peterson, *Calvin and the Atonement* (Fearn, Ross-shire: Mentor, 2009), 124.

‘union with the offices of Christ.’⁷² This theological meaning also becomes obvious in Calvin’s prayer, with which he closes one of his lectures on Malachi 2:9, and in the *Institutes*, as follows:

Grant, Almighty God, that *since Thou hast deigned to take us as a priesthood to Thyself*, and has chosen us when we were not only in the lowest condition, but even profane and alien to all holiness, and hast consecrated us to thyself by Thy Holy Spirit, that we may offer ourselves as holy victims to Thee; O grant that we may bear in mind our office and our calling, and sincerely devote ourselves to Thy service, and so present to Thee our effects and our labours, that Thy name may be truly glorified in us, and that it may really appear that *we have been ingrafted into the body of Thy only-begotten Son; and as He is the chief and the only true and perpetual priest, may we become partakers of that priesthood with which Thou has been pleased to honour Him, so that He may take us as associates to Himself*; and thus may Thy name be perpetually glorified by the whole body as well as by the Head.—Amen⁷³ (own emphasis).

The Mediator interceding for us is Christ, by whom we offer ourselves and what is ours to the Father. He is our Pontiff, who has entered the heavenly sanctuary (Heb. 9:24) and opens a way for us to enter (cf. Heb. 10:20). He is the altar (cf. Heb. 13:10) upon which we lay our gifts, *that whatever we venture to do, we may undertake in him. He it is, I say, that has made us a kingdom and priests unto the Father (Rev. 1:6)*⁷⁴ (own emphasis).

From the viewpoint of ‘union with Christ’s offices,’ believers participate in ‘the three offices of Christ’ as priest, prophet, and king by the real union with Christ’s substance. It also has a thread of connection with the great commandment of Jesus Christ (Mt. 28:18-20).

Thus, believers exceed the level of mere disciples of Jesus Christ, as ‘little Christs,’ who have been given the offices of Christ for the world and our neighbour. This entails theological redefinition of our identity and status, and also our mission and role. In today’s generation in which the Church weakens constitutionally as time passes, and also to our fellow believers who are living with identity confusion, this theological meaning of ‘union with Christ offices’ of the “union with Christ” thought should receive its due emphasis.

⁷² CO. 6: 22; *Comm.* on Mal. 2:9; *Comm.* on Zec. 3:4; *Institutes*, 2.15.1; 2.15.3; 2.15.4; 2.15.5; 2.15.6; 3.1.1; 3.6.2; 3.11.10; 3.15.8; 4.8.1; 4.18.14; 4.18.17; 4.19.25; 4.19.28.

⁷³ Jean Calvijn, *Ioannis Calvini Noviodvnensis Opera Omnia; In Novem Tomos Digesta*, trans. and ed. Jan Jacobsz Schipper and Borrit Jansz Smit (Amstelodami: apudviduam Joannis Jacobi Schipper, 1671), Vol. 5, 42. It is quoted from Ronald S. Wallace, *Calvin’s Doctrine of the Christian Life*, 28-9.

⁷⁴ *Institutes*, 4.18.17.

5.4.2. Substantial Union (as a more concrete term)

Secondly, if seen from the more concrete viewpoint, we find the theological meaning of ‘substantial union,’ which means that Christ’s body is united with us as believers as one. As I mentioned earlier, if we do not deal with this substantial union, the “union with Christ” thought becomes reduced to an empty, speculative theory. The substantial union is one of the representative theological meanings that recur most in Calvin’s “union with Christ” thought.⁷⁵

Calvin emphasizes “union with Christ” thought, an important notion of the Scriptures, not as mere abstract or speculative notions, but as the important truth that Christ’s substance accomplishes the mystical union with us. His emphasis on the theological meaning of ‘substantial union’ is visible in the following citation:

This is the purport of the apostles’ statements: “The church ... is the body of Christ, and the fullness of him” (Eph. 1:23); but he is “the head” (Eph. 4:15) “from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by... joints... makes bodily growth” (Eph. 4:16); “our bodies are members of Christ” (1 Cor. 6:15). We understand that all these things could not be brought about otherwise than *by his cleaving to us wholly in spirit and body*. But Paul graced with a still more glorious title that intimate fellowship in which *we are joined with his flesh when he said, “We are members of his body, of his bones and of his flesh” (Eph. 5:30). Finally, to witness to this thing greater than all words*, he ends his discourse with an exclamation: “This,” he says, “is a great mystery” (Eph. 5:32)⁷⁶ (own emphasis).

For though he has taken his flesh away from us, and in the body has ascended into heaven, yet he sits at the right hand of the Father — that is, he reigns in the Father’s power and majesty and glory. This Kingdom is neither bounded by location in space nor circumscribed by any limits. Thus Christ is not prevented from exerting his power wherever he pleases, in heaven and on earth. *He shows his presence in power and strength, is always among his own people, and breathes his life upon them, and lives in them, sustaining them, strengthening, quickening, keeping them unharmed, as if he were present in the body. In short, he feeds his people*

⁷⁵ *Institutes*, 2.13.2; 2.16.16; 2.17.1; 3.1.2; 3.1.3; 3.11.10; 3.20.19; 3.22.6; 4.1.3; 4.1.21; 4.2.5; 4.2.6; 4.3.1; 4.6.9; 4.6.10; 4.6.17; 4.7.21; 4.7.24; 4.11.2; 4.14.15; 4.15.15; 4.17.1; 4.17.3; 4.17.4; 4.17.5; 4.17.6; 4.17.8; 4.17.9; 4.17.10; 4.17.11; 4.17.12; 4.17.18; 4.17.19; 4.17.20; 4.17.21; 4.17.22; 4.17.26; 4.17.28; 4.17.32; 4.17.33; 4.17.34; 4.17.38; 4.17.44; 4.17.45; 4.18.10; 4.19.3; *Comm.* on Mt. 26:26; *Comm.* on Jn. 5:26; 17:3; *Comm.* on 1 Co. 11:24; *Comm.* on Gal. 2:19, 20; *Comm.* on Eph. 2:4; 5:29, 30, 31, 32; *Comm.* on Jas. 2:14; John Calvin, *Calvin: Theological Treatises*, ed. and trans. J.K.S. Reid, vol. 22, *The Library of Christian Classics* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1954), 148; idem, *Sermons on Galatians*, trans. Arthur Golding (London, 1574; rpt., Audubon, NJ: Old Paths Publications, 1995), 484.

⁷⁶ *Institutes*, 4.17.9.

*with his own body, the communion of which he bestows upon them by the power of his Spirit*⁷⁷ (own emphasis).

5.4.2.1. Organic Union

In the same manner, “union with Christ” is a ‘spiritual union’ by the Holy Spirit, while also being ‘substantial union’ that unites Christ’s body and us, leading to the theological meaning of ‘organic union’ which is implicit in the “union with Christ” thought (Jn. 15:5; 1 Co. 6:15; Eph. 1:22-23; 4:15-16; 5:30).⁷⁸

Calvin frequently emphasizes this idea of an ‘organic union’ in expressions such as ‘Christ becomes our Head,’ ‘we become a member of Christ,’ and ‘union with Christ’s body,’ have been comprehensively dealt with in Calvin’s “union with Christ” thought. The following statement explains “union with Christ” as ‘organic union:’

*Such is the union between us and Christ, who in some sort makes us partakers of his substance. “We are bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh,” (Gen. 2:23); not because, like ourselves, he has a human nature, but because, by the power of his Spirit, he makes us a part of his body, so that from him we derive our life*⁷⁹ (own emphasis).

At the same time, however, I add that by faith we embrace Christ not as appearing from afar but as joining himself to us that *he may be our head, we his members...* And Chrysostom writes the same thing in another passage: “*Christ makes us his body not by faith only but by the very thing itself.*” For he means that such good is not obtained from any other source than faith; but he only wishes to exclude the possibility that anyone, when he hears faith mentioned, *should conceive of it as mere imagining*⁸⁰ (own emphasis).

5.4.2.2. Vital Union

⁷⁷ *Institutes*, 4.17.18. Calvin’s statement has already been quoted from the viewpoint of ‘union by the Holy Spirit’ in this Chapter footnote no. 10. Here, however, it was quoted from the viewpoint of ‘substantial union.’

⁷⁸ For the ‘organic union’ of “union with Christ” thought, see the following: Augustus Hopkins Strong, *Union with Christ: A Chapter of Systematic Theology* (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1913), 43-4; Michael S. Horton, *Lord and Servant* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005), 231.

⁷⁹ *Comm.* on Eph. 5:31.

⁸⁰ *Institutes*, 4.17.6.

Regarding the meaning of Christ's body that unites with us as one body both virtually and organically, 'substantial union' contains the meaning of 'organic union,' but includes the theological meaning of 'vital union,' as Christ, the fountainhead of life, breathes his life into us (Ro. 8:10). When the life of Christ flows into us through the union with His substance, we experience the virtual re-creation as a new person and inherit the benefits that come from Christ.

Furthermore, because Christ's life has been transferred into us through the Holy Spirit and faith, we also become heirs who "already" participate in the eternal life. Therefore, the theological meaning of 'vital union' makes us recognize that the origin of our power is not from ourselves, but from the life of Christ, who is united with us substantially.

From this point of view, the theological meaning of 'vital union' explains our identity as Christians, for we, who have possessed His life through the union with Christ's substance, "have been crucified with Christ and we no longer live, but Christ lives in us" (Gal. 2:20). This is one of the important facts that Calvin addresses frequently through the 'vital union' metaphor,⁸¹ as can be read from the following extract:

Yet not I, but Christ liveth in me. This explains what he meant by "living to God." He does not live by his own life, but is animated by the secret power of Christ; so that Christ may be said to live and grow in him; for, *as the soul enlivens the body, so Christ imparts life to his members.* It is a remarkable sentiment, that believers live out of themselves, that is, they live in Christ; *which can only be accomplished by holding real and actual communication with him*⁸² (own emphasis).

For even though the apostle teaches that "Christ dwells in our hearts through faith" (Eph. 3:17, cf. Vg.), no one will interpret this indwelling to be faith, *for through this believers gain Christ abiding in them. In this way the Lord intended*, by calling himself the "bread of life" (John 6:51), to teach not only that salvation for us rests on faith in his death and resurrection, *but also that, by true partaking of him, his life passes into us and is made ours* – just as bread when taken as food imparts vigor to the body⁸³ (own emphasis).

5.4.2.3. Transformative Union and Creative Union

⁸¹ *Institutes*, 3.1.2; 3.1.3; 3.8.7; 3.11.9; 3.11.12; 3.15.5; 3.22.6; 3.22.7; 4.15.15; 4.17.3; 4.17.5; 4.17.9; 4.17.10; 4.17.11; 4.17.18; 4.17.32; 4.17.33; 4.17.34; *Comm.* on Mt. 26:26; *Comm.* on Ro. 8:10; *Comm.* on 1 Co. 11:24; *Comm.* on Gal. 2:19, 20; *Comm.* on Eph. 5:31.

⁸² *Comm.* on Gal. 2:20.

⁸³ *Institutes*, 4.17.5.

In the same manner, in the sense that Christ's life has formed us to resemble the Lord, 'substantial union' also contains the theological meaning of 'transformative union' (Ro. 6:5; Gal. 4:19; Col. 2:11, 20). Christ creates "a new heart" and "a new spirit" in us by his Spirit (Eze. 36:26-27), and he will carry its work "on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus" (Php. 1:6).⁸⁴

The theological meaning of the 'transformative union' is invoked with such expressions as: we are "created a new;" "God reforms us by his Spirit;" "the Lord conformed us to a new life;" "new creation (2 Co. 5:17);" and "he reforms our affections,"⁸⁵ it has also had the meaning of 'creative union.' From the viewpoint of these theological meanings, as believers we should ceaselessly pursue transformation, for Christ wants to accomplish his form in us.⁸⁶ Perhaps Calvin, who is the father of the Reformation, knew well that the life and death of the Church and us depended on receiving transformation.

5.4.2.4. Essential Union

Fourthly, the theological meaning of 'essential union' emerges from the 'substantial union' of the "union with Christ" thought. Since Calvin's death there have been many interpretations of the theological meaning of 'substantial union' of his "union with Christ" thought, while many misunderstandings and inaccurate understandings prevailed, because elements from his polemical statement to Osiander led many to conclude that 'he strongly rejected the essential union of Osiander.' Charles Partee's following statement is an example:

Moreover, while Calvin is willing on occasion to use the term "substance" in a positive sense, his rejection of Osiander's view precludes a simple ontological identification between the believer and the redeemer. *Calvin clarifies his position by insisting that the union with Christ is effected not by the inflowing of substance but by the grace and power of the Spirit.* Thus perhaps one could say in summary fashion that the union with Christ for Calvin is not mystical (in the sense of imitation) *nor substantial (in an ontological sense)* but real (in a genuine but unspecified and unspecifiable sense)⁸⁷ (own emphasis).

⁸⁴ *Institutes*, 2.3.6.

⁸⁵ *Institutes*, 2.3.6; 3.11.12; 3.17.5; John Calvin, *Sermons on The Epistle to the Ephesians*, 472.

⁸⁶ *Comm.* on Gal. 4:19.

⁸⁷ Charles Partee, "Calvin's Central Dogma Again," 82. Partee's quoted the following literature in this regard: *Comm.* on 1 Co. 6:15; Helmut Gollwitzer, *Coena Domini* (Munich: Chr. Kaiser, 1937), 177ff; E. David Willis, "Calvin's Use of *Substantia*," in *Calvinus Ecclesiae Genevensis Custos*, ed. Wilhelm F. Neuser (New York: Peter Lang, 1984), 289-301. See also Partee's following statement: "Wilhelm Niesel, *Calvins Lehre*

This interpretation, however, is open to contestation, for Calvin acknowledges the virtual union between Christ's essence and us as believers. Accordingly, Osiander's thought to which Calvin reacted negatively is not 'the essential union' between Christ and us, but 'the essential mixture.' The 'essential mixture' is a pantheistic idea, which mingles Christ's and our essence as one, but 'essential union' means that Christ's essence dwells in us, accomplishing the mystical union by the Holy Spirit and faith; that is, it is to be one virtually, but never means the mixture of the two essences, like flour dough.

The reason why 'mystical union' is possible substantially is that the initiative of the union does not belong to us, but to the Triune God, and also because it is a 'spiritual union.' As mentioned previously, 'substantial union' cannot be explained without 'the spiritual union,' and the opposite applies equally. In short, the formulae of the union reveal its indivisible relationship. Christ's essence and ours are united by the Holy Spirit, but the pantheistic mixture, in which two essences are mingled as one, never occurs in us.⁸⁸ Calvin's following statement clearly indicates this:

He (Osiander) says that we are one with Christ. We agree. *But we deny that Christ's essence is mixed with our own...* Although he may make the excuse that by the term "essential righteousness" he means nothing else but to meet the opinion that we are considered righteous for Christ's sake, yet he has clearly expressed himself as not content with that righteousness which has been acquired for us by Christ's obedience and sacrificial death... Then he throws in a *mixture of substances* by which God – transfusing himself into us, as it were – makes us part of himself. For the fact that it comes about through the power of the Holy Spirit that we grow together with Christ, and he becomes our Head and we his members, *he reckons of almost no importance unless Christ's essence be mingled with ours*⁸⁹ (my own emphasis).

Some explain, that it is given to us, when we are made partakers of all the blessings which Christ has procured for us in his body – when, I say, we by faith embrace Christ as crucified for us, and raised up from the dead, and in this way are effectually made partakers of all his benefits. As for

vom Abendmahl (Munich: Chr. Kaiser, 1930), 50-51 points out that in the "Second Defense Against Westphal," *Calvin's Tracts*, ed. and trans. Henry Beveridge II (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1983), 277 (CO 9, 70f), Calvin replaces the concept of substance side by side. Commenting on Eph. 5:30 (CO 8, 382; 51, 768-70), Calvin insists that this sacred union (*ceste union sacrée*) is a miracle of the Holy Spirit and is not merely "spiritual" but includes our being flesh of his flesh and bone of his bone. Doubtlessly this view helps to explain the importance which Calvin ascribes to the "local presence" or the "risen and integral humanity of Christ."

⁸⁸ *Institutes*, 1.15.5.

⁸⁹ *Institutes*, 3.11.5. I have already quoted this statement of Calvin in this Chapter's footnotes no. 3 and 26. I want to re-quote this, however, to distinguish between the 'essential union' and the 'essential mixture.'

those who are of this opinion, I have no objection to their holding such a view. As for myself, I acknowledge, that it is only when we obtain Christ himself, that we come to partake of Christ's benefits. He is, however, *obtained*, I affirm, not only when we believe that he was made an offering for us, *but when he dwells in us — when he is one with us — when, in fact, we are incorporated with him (so to speak) into one life and substance.* Besides, I attend to the import of the words, for Christ does not simply present to us the benefit of his death and resurrection, but the very body in which he suffered and rose again... *I use the common form of expression, but my meaning is, that we may truly be made one with him, or, what amounts to the same thing, that a life-giving virtue from Christ's flesh is poured into us by the Spirit, though it is at a great distance from us, and is not mixed with us*⁹⁰ (own emphasis).

In the same manner, Calvin acknowledges the union between believers and Christ's "reality," "substance," or "essence," but rejects outright the mixture of the two essences. Denotatively, 'substance' and 'essence' are synonyms; therefore to acknowledge 'substantial union' but reject 'essential union' would be a self-contradiction. Calvin, therefore, was perturbed by Osiander's pantheistic 'essential mixture' of Christ's substance and ours, even though he acknowledges the 'essential union.' This can be deduced from the following statements:

Suppose he had only said that Christ, in justifying us, by conjunction of essence becomes ours, not only in that in so far as he is man is he our Head, *but also in that the essence of the divine nature is poured into us.* Then he would have fed on these delights with less harm, *and perhaps such a great quarrel on account of this delusion would not have had to arise*⁹¹ (own emphasis).

... but pretends that we are substantially righteous in God by the infusion both of his essence and of his quality. For this is the reason why he contends so vehemently that not only Christ but also the Father and the Holy Spirit, dwell in us. *Although I admit this to be true, yet I say that it has been perversely twisted by Osiander; for he ought to have considered the manner of the indwelling — namely, that the Father and Spirit are in Christ, and even as the fullness of deity dwells in him (Col. 2:9), so in him we possess the whole of deity*⁹² (own emphasis).

⁹⁰ *Comm.* on 1 Co. 11:24.

⁹¹ *Institutes*, 3.11.6.

⁹² *Institutes*, 3.11.5. I have already quoted this statement of Calvin's in footnotes no. 3, 28, and 92 of this Chapter. I re-quote, however, to distinguish between the 'essential union' and the 'essential mixture.'

5.4.2.5. ‘Union with Christ’s Two Natures’ and ‘Integrated Union’

‘Essential union’ is theologically significant, because the union between Christ’s essence and us implies a union with both Christ’s human and divine natures by the power of the Holy Spirit (1 Jn. 4:2-3). This is our confession of faith, as confirmed at the Council of Chalcedon (AD 451), that the human and divine natures of Christ are distinct, but not subject to confusion, division or separation (*inconfuse et inseparabiliter*).⁹³

The other theological meaning of ‘union with Christ’s two natures’ is contained in ‘essential union’ of the “union with Christ” thought, due to the substance of Christ, who accomplishes the mystical union with us by the Holy Spirit. Both natures are distinct but they also share an indivisible relationship. For this reason, Calvin treats the union with Christ’s human nature and us as believers by the Holy Spirit separately, according to necessity,⁹⁴ but concentrates on the ‘union with Christ’s two natures’ in his theology.⁹⁵ His following statements testify to this fact:

*Only he who was true God and true man could bridge the gulf between God and ourselves... What then? The situation would surely have been hopeless had the very majesty of God not descended to us, since it was not in our power to ascend to him. Hence, it was necessary for the Son of God to become for us “Immanuel, that is, God with us” (Isa. 7:14; Matt. 1:23), and in such a way that his divinity and our human nature might by mutual connection grow together. Otherwise the nearness would not have been near enough, nor the affinity sufficiently firm, for us to hope that God might dwell with us*⁹⁶ (own emphasis).

For as the eternal Word of God is the fountain of life (John 1:4), so his flesh, as a channel, conveys to us that life which dwells intrinsically, as we

⁹³ Sinclair B. Ferguson, David F. Wright and J. I. Packer, *New Dictionary of Theology* (Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter-Varsity Press, 1988), 180. ‘Hypostatic Union’ is the classical ‘Christology’ that was confirmed at the Councils of Chalcedon (A. D. 451). It means that “the Chalcedonian Definition was prepared by over 500 Greek bishops at the Council of Chalcedon in 451. In response to erroneous interpretations of the person of Christ advanced by Apollinarius, Nestorius and Eutyches (see Monophysitism), the Definition states that Jesus Christ is perfectly God and perfectly man, that he is consubstantial with God as to his divinity, and with mankind as to his humanity. Moreover, humanity and deity are joined in the God-man ‘without confusion, without change, without division, without separation.’ Chalcedon represents the definitive statement, albeit in Greek ontological language, of how Jesus Christ was God and human at the same time.”

⁹⁴ *Comm.* on 1 Co. 11:24; *Institutes*, 2.13.2; 3.11.10; 4.17.18; 4.17.19. When dealing with the mystical union between Christ’s human nature and ours, the most important is the recognition that the union is possible by the power of the Holy Spirit and our faith, because if we deal with the union without spiritual union and mystical union by the Holy Spirit, we will have fallen into the theological error of the mixture, which mingles Christ’s human nature with ours, which worried Calvin so much.

⁹⁵ *Comm.* on Jn. 6:51; 16:56; *Comm.* on Gal. 2:20; *Comm.* on Eph. 4:18; *Institutes*, 2.12.1; 2.12.2; 2.12.3; 3.11.5; 3.11.6; 3.11.7; 3.11.8; 3.11.9; 3.11.12.

⁹⁶ *Institutes*, 2.12.1.

say, in his Divinity. And in this sense it is called life-giving, because it conveys to us that life which it borrows for us from another quarter⁹⁷ (own emphasis).

This is another confirmation; for while he alone has life in himself, he shows how we may enjoy it, that is, by *eating his flesh; as if he had affirmed that there is no other way in which he can become ours, than by our faith being directed to his flesh. For no one will ever come to Christ as God, who despises him as man;* and therefore, if you wish to have any interest in Christ, you must take care, above all things, that you do not disdain his flesh⁹⁸ (own emphasis).

In the same manner, Calvin emphasizes that the mystical union between Christ's essence and believers is accomplished by the Holy Spirit and faith, not as an 'ontological mixture.' It reflects rather an 'integrated union' of Christ's two natures and us: these are not merely in an intimate relationship as only a matter of expression, but have been integrated into a mystical union with Christ's whole-personality by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Therefore, this is the theological grounds on which can call ourselves as believers 'little Christs,' an identity which unites with Christ's whole-personality. The union implies the acknowledgment of the creative tension between the "already" and the "not yet," under the protection of the promise of Christ. The present circumstances, where the role of the laity has been diminished and the Church deteriorates and weakens, demand thorough theological rearrangement and self-examination of our mission and identity.

5.5. Spiritual Union (as a more comprehensive term)

The research of this dissertation has already revealed that one of the representative theological meanings of "union with Christ" is 'the union by the Holy Spirit,' to such an extent that it is impossible to explain "union with Christ" without reference to the 'union by the Holy Spirit.' For this reason, the theological meaning of 'union by the Holy Spirit' recurs in almost every metaphorical expression of "union with Christ." This comprehensiveness applies equally to 'substantial union,' for the 'real union' between Christ's substance and us as believers is practically impossible without the Holy Spirit; union between Christ and us is the "spiritual union," while being simultaneously, 'substantial union.' These two unions exist in an indivisible inter-relationship.

⁹⁷ *Comm.* on Jn. 6:51.

⁹⁸ *Comm.* on Jn. 16:56.

‘The union by the Holy Spirit’ can also be explained as “spiritual union,” for the formulae of two unions are essentially identical and show the same inter-indivisible relationship. In short, the formulae of the two unions have been differentiated only for analytical purposes to explain “union with Christ” in greater detail. Nevertheless, if seen from the more comprehensive viewpoint, the only distinction is that while ‘the union by the Holy Spirit’ focuses more on ‘the Holy Spirit,’ ‘the spiritual union’ can be interpreted as focusing also on us as believers. The formulae of two unions are therefore similar but also distinct; yet they do not have completely different meanings.

It is important to take note that just as the “union with Christ” thought cannot be explained without reference to ‘the union by the Holy Spirit,’ the same holds true for “spiritual union.” In essence, the ‘spiritual union’ is subsumed under the various theological meanings, and contains the following theological meanings.

5.5.1. Mystical Union

Firstly, it has the essential meaning of “mystical union (*unio mystica*).” Mystical union does not mean the same thing as agnosticism.⁹⁹ Rather, it means that Christ, who sits at the right hand of God after being resurrected and having ascended, has been substantially united with us as believers at the same time, spiritually transcending the reason and consciousness of human beings and the spatial limitations; therefore, it is called a ‘mystical union.’ The Scriptures plainly proclaim the union as “a profound mystery” (Eph. 5:30-32). Calvin also emphasizes that the union between Christ’s substance and us is accomplished by the secret power of the Holy Spirit, and is accomplished mystically.

Calvin deals with this comprehensively throughout his entire theology, due to the importance of the theological meaning of the ‘mystical aspect’ of “union with Christ,”¹⁰⁰ as indicated:

He strengthens in plainer words the argument he has already stated; for the similitude which he mentions leaves now nothing doubtful, inasmuch as grafting designates not only a conformity of example, *but a secret union*,

⁹⁹ Agnosticism is the theory in which T. H. Huxley (1829-95) insisted that it is impossible for a human being to know God because God exists transcending time and space. See Alan Richardson and John Bowden, *A New Dictionary of Christian Theology* (London: SCM Press, 1983), 9-10; Sinclair B. Ferguson, David F. Wright, and J. I. Packer, *New Dictionary of Theology*, 12.

¹⁰⁰ *Comm.* on Ro. 6:5; *Comm.* on 1 Co. 11:24; *Comm.* on Eph. 5:29, 30, 31, 32; *Serm.* on Acts. 2:1-4; *Serm.* on Eph. 5:32; *Institutes*, 2.2.16; 2.3.1; 2.3.6; 2.12.7; 3.1.1; 3.1.3; 3.11.5; 3.11.9; 3.11.10; 4.17.1; 4.17.3; 4.17.5; 4.17.7; 4.17.8; 4.17.9; 4.17.10; 4.17.11.

by which we are joined to him; so that he, reviving us by his Spirit, transfers his own virtue to us... But there is no reason why you should seek to apply the metaphor or comparison in every particular; for between the grafting of trees, and this which is spiritual, a disparity will soon meet us: in the former the graft draws its aliment from the root, but retains its own nature in the fruit; but in the latter not only we derive the vigour and nourishment of life from Christ, but we also pass from our own to his nature¹⁰¹ (own emphasis).

Therefore, that joining together of Head and members, that indwelling of Christ in our hearts – in short, that mystical union – are accorded by us the highest degree of importance, so that Christ, having been made ours, makes us sharers with him in the gifts with which he has been endowed. We do not, therefore, contemplate him outside ourselves from afar in order that his righteousness may be imputed to us but because we put on Christ and are engrafted into his body – in short, because he deigns to make us one with him¹⁰² (own emphasis).

In the same manner, the essential meaning of ‘spiritual union’ has the theological meaning that Christ accomplishes the ‘mystical union’ with us as believers spiritually, and at the same time, practically through the Spirit. From this point of view, mystical union definitely transcends our natural world and the reason of human beings. Therefore, as mentioned previously regarding the ‘faith union,’ “unless faith joins us to Christ,” we cannot be blessed with the benefits of the mystical union, and we also cannot understand it.

The obvious explanation is that Christ has accomplished the mystical union with his believers by the Holy Spirit and faith so that the theological meanings of ‘supernatural union,’ ‘transcendental union,’ “secret union,” “miraculous union,” or ‘incomprehensible union’ come to be included in the “mystical union.”¹⁰³ Calvin’s following statements demonstrate this clearly:

This is a great mystery. He concludes by expressing his astonishment at the spiritual union between Christ and the church. This is a great mystery; by which he means, that no language can explain fully what it implies. It is to no purpose that men fret themselves to comprehend, by the judgment of the flesh, the manner and character of this union; for here the infinite power of the Divine Spirit is exerted. Those who refuse to admit anything on this subject beyond what their own capacity can reach, act an exceedingly foolish part. We tell them that the flesh and blood of Christ are

¹⁰¹ *Comm.* on Ro. 6:5.

¹⁰² *Institutes*, 3.11.10. I already have quoted this statement of Calvin’s in footnote no. 75 of Chapter Two. Here, however, I requote it to emphasize the “mystical union.”

¹⁰³ *TT.* 2:291, 399, 508; *Comm.* on 1 Co. 11:24; *Serm.* on Eph. 5:32; *Institutes*, 4.17.1; 4.17.9; 2.12.7; 3.1.1; 3.2.24; 3.11.5; 4.17.31; 4.17.32; 4.17.33; 4.19.34.

exhibited to us in the Lord's supper. *"Explain to us the manner," they reply, "or you will not convince us."* For my own part, I am overwhelmed by the depth of this mystery, and am not ashamed to join Paul in acknowledging at once my ignorance and my admiration. How much more satisfactory would this be than to follow my carnal judgment, in undervaluing what Paul declares to be a deep mystery! Reason itself teaches how we ought to act in such matters; *for whatever is supernatural is clearly beyond our own comprehension. Let us therefore labour more to feel Christ living in us, than to discover the nature of that intercourse*¹⁰⁴ (own emphasis).

*Since, however, this mystery of Christ's secret union with the devout is by nature incomprehensible, he shows its figure and image in visible signs best adapted to our small capacity. Indeed, by giving guarantees and tokens he makes it as certain for us as if we had seen it with our own eyes. For this very familiar comparison penetrates into even the dullest minds: just as bread and wine sustain physical life, so are souls fed by Christ. We now understand the purpose of this mystical blessing...*¹⁰⁵ (own emphasis).

On the other hand, this mystical union between Christ and us as believers, has the feature of indivisible 'real union' and 'spiritual union,' because in this theological meaning of "mystical union," the two mutually antithetical union formulae are connected biblically and theologically. Exclusion of the factor of 'spiritual union' from the 'real union' causes the same pantheistic error as Osiander's 'ontological mixture.' On the contrary, if we exclude the 'real union' from the 'spiritual union,' "union with Christ" is degraded into a dry abstract notion, or as an extreme mystical thought.

In this conception of "mystical union," however, 'spiritual union' and 'real union' are not in conflict, but become one. Mystical union is thus an important theological meaning of the "union with Christ" thought which proves the indivisibility of the two union's formulae. From the same point of view, the logical proof that the many benefits belonging to Christ could be given to us practically and spiritually can also be explained in this "mystical union."

5.5.2. Spiritual Union (as a more concrete term)

If seen from the more concrete viewpoint, a second theological meaning is that of "spiritual union" which includes the meaning that Christ accomplishes 'the union by the Holy

¹⁰⁴ *Comm. on Eph. 5:32.*

¹⁰⁵ *Institutes, 4.17.1.*

Spirit' with us, but with reference to the mystical union with Christ and '*our spirit*.' Viewed in greater detail, the theological meanings of the '*internal union*' and the '*whole-personal union*' are found in the "spiritual union," for Christ dwells in our spirit and heart through his Spirit, but on the other hand, Christ reigns over our whole-personality.

The Scriptures, therefore, proclaim both the theological meaning of the 'internal union' and 'whole-personality union' with Christ, as "The Spirit himself testifies *with our spirit* that we are God's children" (Ro. 8:16); "we live in him and he in us" through the Holy Spirit (1 Jn. 3:24; 4:13); "you may participate in the divine nature" (2 Pe. 1:4); and "you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it" (1 Co. 12:27; 2 Co. 4:10; Eph. 5:30). Calvin emphasizes that Christ has united with us as believers, not only spiritually, but also by the whole-personality, through the power of the Holy Spirit. This fact appears clearly in the following statements:

Hence he says, as if with the view of explaining it, that Christ is joined with us and we with him in such a way, that we become one body with him...*Observe, that the spiritual connection which we have with Christ belongs not merely to the soul, but also to the body, so that we are flesh of his flesh, &c.* (Eph. 5:30). Otherwise the hope of a resurrection were weak, *if our connection were not of that nature — full and complete*¹⁰⁶ (own emphasis).

*Now, that sacred partaking of his flesh and blood, by which Christ pours his life into us, as if it penetrated into our bones and marrow, he also testifies and seals in the Supper — not by presenting a vain and empty sign, but by manifesting there the effectiveness of his spirit to fulfill what he promises. And truly he offers and shows the reality there signified to all who sit at that spiritual banquet, although it is received with benefit by believers alone, who accept such great generosity with true faith and gratefulness of heart*¹⁰⁷ (own emphasis).

In sense of Christ's uniting with us through the Spirit, not only by the internal formula, but by the whole-personality formula, this union is rendered a 'spiritual union,' and at the same time, it is a 'real union,' even though we observe it by focusing on us as believers. Furthermore, in the same way as the relationship of the 'substantial union' and 'spiritual union' mentioned earlier, these internal and whole-personality unions' formulae are also mutually indivisible.

Calvin frequently emphasizes in his theology that Christ unites with us as believers

¹⁰⁶ *Comm.* on 1 Co. 6:15.

¹⁰⁷ *Institutes*, 4.17.10.

completely through these formulae. In detail, for example, the expressions through which Calvin integrates the whole personality, spiritual, and mystical union with Christ and us as believers are “an *integral* communion;” “he becomes *completely* one with us;” “*fully* and firmly joined with God;” “Christ *perfectly* joins us with him in the heavenly life;” “We possess Christ more *fully*,” and “The Spirit alone causes us to possess Christ *completely*.”¹⁰⁸ From this point of view, the theological meaning of ‘*complete union*’ is included in the spiritual union.

On the other hand, the source of this mystical ‘complete union’ with Christ is placed on the theological ground through the incarnation of Christ. As the Son of God, Christ was incarnated to become a complete Mediator, bridging the gap that had been wrought between God and humans by our sin; this accomplished the redemption of human beings “once for all” by his becoming a sacrifice and offering simultaneously. The Son of God assumed a human body by the power of the Holy Spirit (Lk. 1:35): therefore, the divine and human natures have been completely united in Christ who was incarnated. This is called as the “Hypostatic Union.” Calvin sought the origin of the ‘mystical union’ that is completely united with Christ and our whole-personality as one. His following statements demonstrate this clearly:

Who could have done this had not the selfsame Son of God become the Son of man, and had not so taken what was ours as to impart what was his to us, and to make what was his by nature ours by grace? Therefore, relying on this pledge, we trust that we are sons of God, for God’s natural Son fashioned for himself *a body from our body, flesh from our flesh, bones from our bones, that he might be one with us* (Gen. 2:23-24, mediated through Eph. 5:29-31). *Ungrudgingly he took our nature upon himself to impart to us what was his*, and to become both Son of God and Son of man in common with us. Hence that holy brotherhood which he commends with his own lips when he says: “I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God” (John 20:17)¹⁰⁹ (own emphasis).

Accordingly, our Lord came forth as true man and took the person and the name of Adam in order to take Adam’s place in obeying the Father; to present our flesh as the price of satisfaction to God’s righteous judgment, and, in the same flesh, to pay the penalty that we had deserved. In short, since neither as God alone could he feel death, nor as man alone could he overcome it, he coupled human nature with divine that to atone for sin he

¹⁰⁸ *Comm.* on 1 Co. 6:15; *Institutes*, 4.16.7. 4.17.7; 2.12.1; 2.16.3; 4.17.33; 3.2.24; 4.17.38; 4.17.10; 3.23.14; 3.1.1; 3.17.15.

¹⁰⁹ *Institutes*, 2.12.2.

might submit the weakness of the one to death; and that, wrestling with death by the power of the other nature, he might win victory for us... But we should especially espouse what I have just explained: *our common nature with Christ is the pledge of our fellowship with the Son of God*; and clothed with our flesh he vanquished death and sin together that the victory and triumph might be ours¹¹⁰ (own emphasis).

However there is one aspect here of which we should be very careful. It never means that the complete union between Christ and us as believers is the essential mixture. In other words, we have been blessed with great grace to participate in Christ's divine nature by the power of the Holy Spirit in the complete mystical union with Christ (2 Pe. 1:4), it does not imply the pantheistic complete blend that mingles Christ's essence and ours. Calvin has resolutely rejected this idea of a 'mixture.' Furthermore, as mentioned previously, we should recognize that the initiative for the completeness of the union is not located in ourselves but in Christ, and is located in the eschatological tension between the "already" and the "not yet."

5.5.3. The Unity of the Church

Thirdly, the "spiritual union" contains the theological meaning that provides a ground for "the unity of the church." The Scriptures emphasize that all believers are members of one body by the union with Christ, who is the Head (Ro. 12:5; 1 Co. 12:27; Eph. 5:30). But how can all churches, which are scattered all over the world, virtually be the one body of Christ? Eventually, it cannot be explained without the sense of "spiritual union." Calvin located the origin of "the unity of the church" in the "union with Christ," so that the unity of the church has been dealt with comprehensively, mostly as having a close connection to "union with Christ."¹¹¹

Some theologians have called Calvin "an ecumenical pioneer amongst the

¹¹⁰ *Institutes*, 2.12.3.

¹¹¹ CO. 14:314; 50:251; 51:191; *Institutes*, 4.1.2; 4.1.3; 4.1.9; 4.6.17; 4.17.38; *Comm.* on 1 Co. 10:16; *Comm.* on Gal. 5:14; *Comm.* on 1 Pe. 3:7. For the relationship between "union with Christ" thought and 'the unity of the Church,' see also the following books: Stephen N. Williams, "Living in Union with Christ according to John Calvin (1509-1564)," in *Living in Union with Christ in Today's World: The Witness of John Calvin and Ignatius Loyola*, ed. Brendan McConvery (Dublin, Ireland: Veritas Publications, 2011), 26; Michael S. Horton, "Calvin's Theology of Union with Christ and the Double Grace: Modern Reception and Contemporary Possibilities," 93; Michael Welker, Michael Weinrich, and Ulrich Möller, *Calvin Today: Reformed Theology and the Future of the Church* (London: T&T Clark, 2011), x; Ronald S. Wallace, *Calvin, Geneva and the Reformation: A Study of Calvin as Social Reformer, Churchman, Pastor and Theologian* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1988), 147-151; T. F. Torrance, *Conflict and Agreement in the Church, Vol. 1: Order and Disorder* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1959), 264-5.

Reformers.”¹¹² It is important that the ground of church unity is contained in “union with Christ,” and the reality of the union is also possible by the “spiritual union.” Therefore, Calvin has treated ‘spiritual union’ and ‘church unity’ by the Holy Spirit together as having a mutual connection, as follows:

It is not sufficient, indeed, for us to comprehend in mind and thought the multitude of the elect, *unless we consider the unity of the church as that into which we are convinced we have been truly engrafted*. For no hope of future inheritance remains to us unless we have been united with all other members under Christ, our Head. The church is called “catholic,” or “universal,” because there could not be two or three churches unless Christ be torn asunder (cf. 1 Cor. 1:13) — which cannot happen! *But all the elect are so united in Christ (cf. Eph. 1:22-23) that as they are dependent on one Head, they also grow together into one body, being joined and knit together (cf. Eph. 4:16) as are the limbs of a body (Rom. 12:5; 1 Co. 10:27; 12:12, 27). They are made truly one since they live together in one faith, hope, and love, and in the same Spirit of God*. For they have been called not only into the same inheritance of eternal life but also to participate in one God and Christ (Eph. 5:30)¹¹³ (own emphasis).

But a community is affirmed, such as Luke describes, in which the heart and soul of the multitude of believers are one (Acts 4:32); and such as Paul has in mind when he urges the Ephesians to be “on body and one Spirit, just as” they “were called in one hope” (Eph. 4:4 p.). *If truly convinced that God is the common Father of all and Christ the common Head, being united in brotherly love, they cannot but share their benefits with one another*¹¹⁴ (own emphasis).

Paul says that the *cup* which has been in this manner *blessed* is *κοινωνία* — the *communion* of the blood of the Lord... But whence, I pray you, comes that *κοινωνία* (*communion*) between us, but from this, that we are united to Christ in such a way, that *we are flesh of his flesh, and bone of his bones?* (Eph. 5:30). For we must first of all be incorporated (so to speak) into Christ, that we may be united to each other. In addition to this, Paul is not disputing at present merely in reference to a mutual fellowship among men, but as to the spiritual union between Christ and believers, with the view of drawing from this, that it is an intolerable sacrilege for them to be polluted by fellowship with idols. *From the connection of the passage, therefore, we may conclude, that (κοινωνία) the communion of*

¹¹² Willem Nijenhuis, *Ecclesia Reformata: Studies on the Reformation*, Vol. II (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1994), 50; John T. McNeill and James H. Nichols, *Ecumenical Testimony: The Concern for Christian Unity within the Reformed and Presbyterian Churches* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1974), 13-26; Willem Nijenhuis, *Calvinus Oecumenicus: Calvin En De Eenheid Der Kerk In Het Light Van Zijn Briefwisseling* (Netherlands: The Hague, 1959), 6-11.

¹¹³ *Institutes*, 4.1.2.

¹¹⁴ *Institutes*, 4.1.3.

*the blood is that connection which we have with the blood of Christ, when he ingrafts all of us together into his body, that he may live in us, and we in him*¹¹⁵ (own emphasis).

The Scriptures and Calvin emphasize “the unity of the church” and ‘the union of the church’ forcefully. Such ‘church unity’ can be interpreted from two viewpoints. Viewed narrowly, it signifies the unity of the individual church’s and each believer’s faith in Christ; thus the serving offices are distinguishable according to the gifts of the Holy Spirit, but the classification of the hierarchical status cannot be justified. With regard to status, all believers become only a ‘little Christ’ in the spiritual union with Christ. From this point of view, Calvin articulated this union in Christ as “*the communion of the blood*” or also as ‘union of *koinonia*.’

From a broader perspective ‘church unity’ also signifies the union of all churches and includes each regional church. Even if there are many churches in an area for various purposes, eventually there exists only one Church *for* Christ, *by* Christ, *of* Christ. From this point of view, it is good news that ‘the movement of church unity (or the ecumenical movement)’ has welcomed a new transitional period after the 20th century. Pitifully, however, the extreme individualism in the church and the phenomenon of church disunity do not seem to be rectified. What is worse, it seems to be that the most serious enemy, which deals the church the most fatal wounds, is not outside of the church, but inside.

Nevertheless, Calvin emphasized: “It (the church) has in a way been joined to the steadfastness of Christ, who will no more allow his believers to be estranged from him than that his members be rent and torn asunder.”¹¹⁶ From the same perspective, “union with Christ” is like a spiritual treasury that becomes a theological ground for the unity of the church; from this time ‘the church union and unity’ is needed more seriously than in any other age.

5.6. Other Theological Meanings

The theological meanings of “union with Christ” are various, besides ‘substantial union’ and ‘spiritual union,’ but excluding these meanings and considering only the others, will result in failure to explain the central concept thoroughly, for all the theological meanings of the thought are in fact in an indivisible relationship with ‘substantial union’ or

¹¹⁵ *Comm.* on 1 Co. 10:16.

¹¹⁶ *Institutes*, 4.1.3.

‘spiritual union.’ Therefore, when dealing with the other theological meanings of the thought, these two are considered for their close inter-connection. In more detail, the meanings of the other theological aspects of the “union with Christ” thought, besides these two, are as following:

5.6.1. Sacramental Union

Firstly, it has the theological meaning of “sacramental union.” Calvin explores this ‘sacramental union’ profoundly, as the accomplished essential and mystical union between the substance of Christ and of us as believers, when he explains the meaning of the doctrine of the sacraments such as the baptism and the Eucharist. From a certain point of view, it is true that he interprets the “union with Christ” thought by the doctrine of the sacrament. As believers, we experience the virtual and mystical union with Christ through the sacrament more than by anything else (1 Co. 10:16; 12:12-13; Gal. 3:27). As believers who are united with Christ, our faith is never merely an abstract notion, but quite the opposite: faith is a living and working life in us. Therefore, Calvin has emphasized the fact that the life of Christ works effectively in us.¹¹⁷

From the viewpoint of “union with Christ,” our belief is not only seeing Christ, who is in heaven, but it also means that we participate in Him practically. Calvin emphasizes this ‘effective union’ between Christ and us through the Holy Spirit as being verified and experienced virtually through these sacred ceremonies that Christ himself established. For this reason, the meaning of ‘sacramental union’ has been contained in the theological meaning of “union with Christ” thought.¹¹⁸ These facts are exposed clearly in Calvin’s statements:

¹¹⁷ *Comm.* on 2 Co. 5:6; 11:24; *Comm.* on Eph. 5:29; *Serm.* on Deuteronomy 1:19-21; *Serm.* on Matthew 28:1-10; *Serm.* on Galatians 13:26-29.

¹¹⁸ *Comm.* on Mt. 26:26; 28:20; *Comm.* on 1 Co. 10:16, 19; 11:24; *Comm.* on Eph. 5:30; John Calvin, “Short Treatise on the Supper of Our Lord,” “Form of Administering the Sacraments,” “Mutual Consent in Regard to the Sacraments,” “Second Defence of the Faith Concerning the Sacraments,” “Last Admonition to Joachim Westphal,” “The True Partaking of the Flesh and Blood of Christ,” “The Best Method of Obtaining Concord,” in *Tracts and Treatises on the Doctrine and Worship of the Church*, Vol. II, trans. Henry Beveridge, ed. Thomas F. Torrance (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1958); *Institutes*, 4.14.7; 4.14.14; 4.14.15; 4.14.16; 4.15.1; 4.15.5; 4.15.6; 4.15.15; 4.15.16; 4.15.22; 4.16.2; 4.16.7; 4.16.17; 4.16.21; 4.16.22; 4.16.31; 4.17.1; 4.17.2; 4.17.4; 4.17.5; 4.17.6; 4.17.7; 4.17.8; 4.17.9; 4.17.10; 4.17.11; 4.17.12; 4.17.13; 4.17.14; 4.17.15; 4.17.16; 4.17.18; 4.17.19; 4.17.20; 4.17.21; 4.17.24; 4.17.26; 4.17.28; 4.17.29; 4.17.30; 4.17.31; 4.17.32; 4.17.33; 4.17.34; 4.17.34; 4.17.38; 4.17.40; 4.17.42; 4.17.42; 4.17.45; 4.18.8; 4.18.10; 4.19.3; 4.19.8; 4.19.35; Ronald S. Wallace, *Calvin’s Doctrine of the Word and Sacrament* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1953), 144-9.

Lastly, our faith receives from baptism the advantage of its sure testimony to us that we are not only engrafted into the death and life of Christ, but so united to Christ himself that we become sharers in all his blessings. For he dedicated and sanctified baptism in his own body (Matt. 3:13) in order that he might have it in common with us as the firmest bond of the union and fellowship which he has deigned to form with us. Hence, Paul proves that we are children of God from the fact that we put on Christ in baptism (Gal. 3:26-27). Thus we see that the fulfillment of baptism is in Christ, whom also for this reason we call the proper object of baptism... But we obtain regeneration by Christ's death and resurrection only if we are sanctified by the Spirit and imbued with a new and spiritual nature¹¹⁹ (own emphasis).

The signs are bread and wine, which represent for us the invisible food that we receive from the flesh and blood of Christ... *Since, however, this mystery of Christ's secret union with the devout is by nature incomprehensible, he shows its figure and image in visible signs best adapted to our small capacity.* Indeed, by giving guarantees and tokens he makes it as certain for us as if we had seen it with our own eyes. For this very familiar comparison penetrates into even the dumbest minds: just as bread and wine sustain physical life, so are souls fed by Christ. We now understand the purpose of this mystical blessing... We are therefore bidden to take and eat the body which was once for all offered for our salvation, *in order that when we see ourselves made partakers in it, we may assuredly conclude that the power of his life-giving death will be efficacious in us¹²⁰* (own emphasis).

In the same manner, in 'sacramental union' the baptism and the Eucharist exceed the meaning of the mere symbol or visible signs through which we participate in Christ's death and resurrection. It also means that we unite and commune intimately with Christ.¹²¹ In other words, the mystical union, which Christ and we accomplish as one body through the Holy Spirit and faith, is also experienced through such sacred ceremonies as the baptism and the Eucharist.

From this point of view, the mutual indivisibility of the two theological meanings of the 'real union' and 'spiritual union' of "union with Christ" have clearly been exposed in the 'sacramental union,' because, if we exclude any one of the two theological meanings, the theological meaning of 'sacramental union' will not be explained fully. It is important that from a theological aspect, Christ's substance has been united with us as believers spiritually by the mystical power of the Holy Spirit, and has been contained in the 'sacramental union.'

¹¹⁹ *Institutes*, 4.15.6.

¹²⁰ *Institutes*, 4.17.1.

¹²¹ *Comm. on Eph.* 5:30.

Calvin's following statements serve to confirm this:

Now, if it be asked whether the bread is the body of Christ and the wine his blood, we answer, that the bread and the wine are visible signs, which represent to us the body and blood, *but that this name and title of body and blood is given to them because they are as it were instruments by which the Lord distributes them to us...* it is therefore figured to us by the visible signs, according as our weakness requires, in such manner, nevertheless, *that it is not a bare figure but is combined with the reality and substance*¹²² (own emphasis).

I say that Christ is the matter or (if you prefer) the substance of all the sacraments... Therefore, the sacraments have effectiveness among us in proportion as we are helped by their ministry sometimes to foster, confirm, and increase the true knowledge of Christ in ourselves; at other times, *to possess him more fully and enjoy his riches*¹²³ (own emphasis).

To summarize, as believers we experience the fullness of mystical union with Christ through the Sacraments of the baptism and the Eucharist, which the Lord himself established. From this point of view, our sacred worship is also the same: it manifests as a spiritual event in which God and we, who are his people, meet, because, similar to the events of the Sacrament, as believers we can experience the fullness of the Triune God, who penetrates into our whole-personality and dwells in our internal world by the Holy Spirit, through the sacred worship.¹²⁴ From this perspective, the theological meaning as a 'union of worship' has also been included in 'sacramental union.'

5.6.2. Holy Union

Secondly, it has the theological meaning of the "holy union." The "union with Christ" thought entails the theological meaning of the "holy union" from the meaning that Christ's sacred substance and ours join in a spiritual mystical union by the power of the Holy Spirit.¹²⁵ As believers we have being sanctified as 'little Christs,' who are similar to the very image of Christ by participation in His holiness. Calvin's following statement articulates the reality of the sacred union:

¹²² *TT*.2:171.

¹²³ *Institutes*, 4.14.16.

¹²⁴ *Institutes*, 1.12.1.

¹²⁵ *Institutes*, 3.1.3; 3.11.10; 4.12.24; 4.17.33; *Comm.* on Ro. 6:5.

When Paul has said that we are flesh of Christ (Eph. 5:30-31), he adds at once: “This is as a mystery” (Eph. 5:32). *For Paul did not mean to tell in what sense Adam uttered the words, but to set forth under the figure and likeness of marriage the holy union that makes us one with Christ.* Even the words themselves express this! For when he informs us that he is speaking of Christ and the church, by way of correction he distinguishes between the rule of marriage and the spiritual union of Christ and the church¹²⁶ (own emphasis).

5.6.3. Indissoluble Union and Eternal Union

Thirdly, the meaning of an ‘indissoluble and eternal union (*indissolubilis et aeterna*)’ from the theological aspect emanates from the “union with Christ” thought. The truth of the Scriptures is the promise that “Christ is with us always, to the very end of the age” (Mt. 28:20) and that not “anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Ro. 8:39). This promise that Christ is with us ‘always and forever’ is never merely a symbolical notion, but will be ‘*a practical occurrence*’ which we experience in “union with Christ,”¹²⁷ for as believers we have been eternally and indissolubly united with Jesus Christ. Calvin also emphasizes that Christ always dwells together with us by this eternally indissoluble union:

Secondly, *it (church) has in a way been joined to the steadfastness of Christ*, who will no more allow his believers to be estranged from him than that his members be rent and torn asunder. *Besides, we are certain that, while we remain within the bosom of the church, the truth will always abide with us*¹²⁸ (own emphasis).

On the other hand, the theological meaning of ‘*union of resurrection*’ arises from the ‘indissoluble union’ and the ‘eternal union.’ For the practical basis, as believers we have been united with the eternity of Christ, the life of Christ’s resurrection. In other words, if, as believers we have been united with the resurrected body of Christ, it means that we participate in His resurrected life, as Calvin shows:

¹²⁶ *Institutes*, 2.12.7.

¹²⁷ *Institutes*, 2.10.15; 3.25.10; 4.1.1; 4.1.3; 4.17.28; *Comm.* on Ro. 8:39; Wilhelm Niesel, *Reformed Symbolics: A Comparison of Catholicism, Orthodoxy, and Protestantism*, trans. David Lewis (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1962), 184; William A. Mueller, “The Mystical Union,” in *Basic Christian Doctrines: Contemporary Evangelical Thought*, ed. Carl F. H. Henry (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1975), 211.

¹²⁸ *Institutes*, 4.1.3.

For he takes it as an agreed principle that it was not for himself alone that it as an agreed principle that it was not for himself alone that Christ was subjected to death, or that he obtained victory over death by rising again... Paul also teaches in another place (Col. 3:4) that God raised his Son from the dead, not to make known a single example of his power, but to show toward us believers the same working of the Spirit, whom he calls "life" while he dwells in us because he was given, to the end that he may quicken what is mortal in us (cf. Rom 8:11)... Therefore, Christ rose again that he might have us as companions in the life to come. He was raised by the Father, inasmuch as he was Head of the church, from which the Father in no way allows him to be severed. He was raised by the power of the Holy Spirit, the Quickener of us in common with him. Finally, he was raised that he might be "the resurrection and the life" (John 11:25)... Paul's exhortation bears upon this: "Christ the first fruits, then... those who are Christ's, each in his order" (1 Cor. 15:23)¹²⁹ (own emphasis).

That our faith becomes strong when we are weak and rich when we are poor is never an abstract belief. The strong power that defeats the solid camp of evil is not a vague, hopeful belief; neither is the final victory of our church a speculative belief like a mere dream. All the promises of the Scriptures are real and are experienced vividly in our belief because Christ has indissolubly and eternally been united with the church as body, which has a life of resurrection. From this perspective, the systematic research of the theological meanings of the "union with Christ" thought and the recognition of its importance offer the alternative as our church seeks to be what is.

¹²⁹ *Institutes*, 3.25.3.

PART THREE

“Union with Christ” Thought and Calvin’s Theology: The Theological Structure and the Doctrinal Scope

He alone is well founded in Christ who has perfect righteousness in himself: since the apostle does not say that He was sent to help us attain righteousness *but himself to be our righteousness* (1 Cor. 1:30). Indeed, he states that “he has chosen us in him” from eternity “before the foundation of the world,” through no merit of our own “but according to the purpose of divine good pleasure” (Eph. 1:4-5, cf. Vg.)... *That thus ingrafted into him* (cf. Rom. 11:19) *we are already, in a manner, partakers of eternal life, having entered in the Kingdom of God through hope. Yet more: we experience such participation in him that,* although we are still foolish in ourselves, he is our wisdom before God; while we are sinners, he is our righteousness; while we are unclean, he is our purity; while we are weak, while we are unarmed and exposed to Satan, yet ours is that power which has been given him in heaven and on earth (Matt. 28:18), by which to crush Satan for us and shatter the gates of hell; while we still bear about with us the body of death, he is yet our life. *In brief, because all his things are ours and we have all things in him, in us there is nothing.*¹ (own emphasis).

Every theological doctrine, having spiritual content, may be taken in a mystical direction. Calvin praises the concept of union with God and confesses mystical union. *Union with Christ is the “marvelous exchange”* by which Christ becoming the Son of man with us makes us sons of God with him (3.17.2).² (own emphasis.)

¹ *Institutes*, 3.15.5.

² Charles Partee, *The Theology of John Calvin* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2008), 169.

CHAPTER SIX

Theological Structure of the “Union with Christ” Thought and the *Institutes*

In the introduction to this dissertation, I presented one of the questions for research as follows: What is the interrelation between Calvin’s “union with Christ” thought and the structural feature, contents, and forms of the *Institutes of the Christian Religion*? Is it possible to infer or verify thoroughly the extensive doctrinal scope of application and the importance of the “union with Christ (*unio cum Christo*)” thought that exists in Calvin’s theology through a detailed reading of the *Institutes*? Also, is there an interrelation between Calvin’s ‘central thought’ and the “union with Christ” thought as it occurs throughout his theological works? To conduct research ascertaining the original delimitation of “union with Christ” that pervades Calvin’s theology, what meanings will it grant to the interpretation of his theology? The answers to the questions for research are already given in part in Part Two.

In Chapter Four, I researched and analyzed the ‘metaphorical expressions’ of various notions, as a representative feature of Calvin’s “union with Christ” thought, centred mostly on a reading of his *Institutes*. It was verified that the comprehensiveness of the “union with Christ” thought, in terms of the aspect of its scope, volume and content are related to the theological theme or meaning in Calvin’s *Institutes* and the rest of his theology.

In Chapter Five, I dealt with the theological meanings of Calvin’s “union with Christ” thought throughout his various theological works. Accordingly, it was verified that there is coherent comprehensiveness of the various theological meanings in the “union with Christ” thought. The research results confirming the ‘comprehensiveness’ gave ample evidence that the “union with Christ” thought acts as a core thought in Calvin’s theology.

In the same manner, the “union with Christ” thought in Calvin’s theology has been explored from different theological angles. In Part Three I will also deal with the following theological works to verify more systematically the fact that “union with Christ” is a core thought in Calvin’s theology: Firstly, in Chapter Six I will examine the structural features of the *Institutes*, which is the condensed version of Calvin’s theology and occupies a core position among his entire theological oeuvre, from the viewpoint of the “union with Christ” thought.

Afterwards, in Chapter Seven, I will examine the inter-relationship between “union with Christ” and the other important theological themes and doctrines, their theological meanings and the doctrinal scope, in detail. I will examine how “union with Christ” plays a role in relation to other theological themes. The “union with Christ” thought will be explicated more firmly through this research as a doctrine that is not merely to be subordinated to soteriology or the doctrine of the sacrament, but which is a core thought of the theology of Calvin.

6.1. The Theological Structure of the “Union with Christ” Thought and the *Institutes*

Charles Partee insists that the doctrine of “union with Christ” has a close inter-relationship with the whole structure of the *Institutes* of Calvin.³ In a practical manner, we know that Calvin’s *Institutes* representing the condensed version of his theology, with a particular ‘theological structure.’ The “union with Christ” thought, nevertheless, has been dealt with comprehensively in Calvin’s theology as being inter-connected to various theological themes and doctrines, and many biblical texts.

At the same time, the “union with Christ” thought has also been dealt with extensively in his theology by more than 150 different metaphorical expressions. Furthermore, this treatment was multi-directional as including various theological notions and various essential meanings. What do these facts mean to us? Is it sufficient to infer that “union with Christ” is a core thought in Calvin’s theology, and provides it with its systemic logic and consistency?

Analysis of the theological structure and content of the *Institutes* of Calvin from the viewpoint of “union with Christ” reveals it as a core thought. Of course, if we compare and analyze the titles of each part, section and chapter of the *Institutes*, the direct mentions of “union with Christ” thought or the quotations of the metaphorical expressions related to the thought are not so numerous. Yet if we look at the structural features and content a different picture emerges.

In Chapter Six, therefore, I will research and analyze the structural features of the *Institutes*, approaching it from the viewpoint of this thought. In more detail, I will first

³ Charles Partee, “Calvin’s Central Dogma Again,” in *The Organizational Structure of Calvin’s Theology*, ed. Richard C. Gamble, 7 vols. (New York: Garland Publishing, INC, 1992), 75-83; idem, *The Theology of John Calvin*, 3.

examine the theological structure of the *Institutes*, paying preferential attention to titles which form the structural framework of the *Institutes*. Secondly, regarding the aspect of content, I will examine the representative structural and theological features related to the central thought. The aim is to accomplish a re-evaluation of the importance of the “union with Christ” thought and its crucial role in Calvin’s theology.

There have been some cautious arguments about the theological structure of the *Institutes*, up to now.⁴ Edward A. Dowey proclaims that there is a twofold structure as “twofold knowledge of God (*duplex cognitio domini*).”⁵ In his opinion, even though the structural arrangement of the *Institutes* ostensibly seems to pursue the four parts of the Apostles’ Creed (God the Creator, God the Redeemer, God the Holy Spirit, and Church and the Sacraments), in fact, it is divisible into “twofold knowledge of God,” namely, “knowledge of God as Creator and as Redeemer.”

T. H. L. Parker, however, acknowledges that the structural arrangement of the *Institutes* is indeed very similar to the Trinitarian structure of the Apostles’ Creed. In particular, he insists that Calvin’s theology follows the character of ‘the Trinitarian form’ from the beginning,⁶ and has been dealt with in the order as ‘the knowledge of God the Creator, God the Redeemer, and God the Holy Spirit.’⁷ From this point of view, Parker insists that the most fundamental twofold knowledge of the *Institutes* is not the “twofold knowledge

⁴ For references concerning a theological structure in the *Institutes*, see the following: Herman J. Selderhuis, “The *Institutes*,” in *The Calvin Handbook*, ed. Herman J. Selderhuis, trans. Judith J. Guder, Henry J. Baron, Randi H. Lundell, and Gerrit W. Sheeres (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 204-5; K. Scott Oliphint, “A Primal and Simple Knowledge (1.1-5),” in *Theological Guide To Calvin’s Institutes: Essays and Analysis*, ed. David W. Hall and Peter A. Lillback (Phillipsburg, New Jersey: P&R Publishing, 2008), 17-21; William Edgar, “Ethics: The Christian Life and Good Works According to Calvin: *Institutes* 3.6-10, 17-19,” in *Theological Guide to Calvin’s Institutes: Essays and Analysis*, ed. David W. Hall and Peter A. Lillback (Phillipsburg, New Jersey: P&R Publishing, 2008), 320; Philip Graham Ryken, “The Believer’s Union with Christ,” in *John Calvin: A Heart for Devotion, Doctrine & Doxology*, ed. Burk Parsons (Lake Mary, FL: Reformation Trust Publishing, 2008), 192; Brian G. Armstrong, “*Duplex cognitio Dei*, Or?: The Problem and Relation of Structure, Form, and Purpose in Calvin’s Theology,” in *Probing the Reformed Tradition: Historical Studies in Honor of Edward A. Dowey, Jr.*, ed. Elsie Anne McKee and Brian G. Armstrong (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1989), 135-53; James Torrance, “Interpreting the Word by the Light of Christ or the Light of Nature? Calvin, Calvinism, and Barth,” in *Calviniana: Ideas and Influence of Jean Calvin, Vol. 5, Sixteenth Century Essays & Studies*, ed. Robert V. Schnucker (Kirkville, Missouri: Sixteenth Century Journal Publishers, Inc., 1988), 256; J. Todd Billings, *Calvin, Participation, and the Gift: The Activity of Believers in Union with Christ* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 102; I. John Hesselink, “Calvin’s Theology,” in *John Calvin*, ed. Donald K. McKim (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 78.

⁵ See Edward A. Dowey, Jr., *The Knowledge of God in Calvin’s Theology* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1952), 41-9; Edward Dowey Jr., “The Structure of Calvin’s Thought as Influenced by the Twofold Knowledge of God,” in *Calvinus Ecclesiae Genevensis Custos*, ed. Wilhelm H. Neuser (Bern: Peter Lang, 1984), 137-46.

⁶ T. H. L. Parker, *Calvin: An Introduction to His Thought* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1995), 4-10.

⁷ See T. H. L. Parker, *Calvin’s Doctrine of the Knowledge of God* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1959).

of God,” but “the knowledge of God and the knowledge of ourselves.”⁸ The evaluation of Muller sets this out clearly:

Parker is certainly correct in arguing against Dowey that the initial and most basic twofold knowledge in the *Institutes* is not the “twofold knowledge of God” but the “knowledge of God and ourselves” the knowledge of God and self that was identified as basic to Calvin’s thought in the first sentence of the 1536 text and that became the two foundational introductory chapters in 1539: this introductory structure remains in 1559. In addition, a rigid understanding of the *duplex cognition Dei* as the primary ordering principle of the *Institutes* leads Dowey to the rather curious conclusion that Calvin sometimes misunderstood the implications of his own model.⁹

In response to Parker’s classification, Richard A. Muller understands the structure of the *Institutes* as containing various elements such as Melancthon’s *Loci Communes*, which followed the structural form of Romans, the order of the Apostles’ Creed, and the Pauline form, including Romans, and so on.¹⁰ Cornelis P. Venema acknowledges the existence of the entire structure of Calvin’s theology as being summarized in the *Institutes*, and he suggests that the structure has an inter-relationship with the “twofold grace of God” that is based on the Trinitarian God, or “union with Christ.”¹¹

The theologian who analysed and presented the structure of the *Institutes* as having a close inter-relationship with the doctrine of “union with Christ” in the most detail, is Charles Partee.¹² Summarized briefly, his analysis of the structure is divided largely into two parts, namely “God for us” and “God with us.”¹³ This is probably based on Calvin’s mention of “Nearly all the wisdom we possess, that is to say, true and sound wisdom, consists of two parts: the knowledge of God and of ourselves,”¹⁴ and ‘the twofold structure of the *Institutes*,’ which is a classification of both Dowey and Parker.

⁸ See T. H. L. Parker, *The Doctrine of the knowledge of God: A Study in the Theology of John Calvin* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1952); idem, *Calvin’s Doctrine of the Knowledge of God*, 119.

⁹ Richard A. Muller, *The Unaccommodated Calvin: Studies in the Foundation of a Theological Tradition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 134.

¹⁰ See Richard A. Muller, *The Unaccommodated Calvin*.

¹¹ See Cornelis P. Venema, “Calvin’s Doctrine of the Last Things: The Resurrection of the Body and the Life Everlasting (3.25 et al.),” in *Theological Guide To Calvin’s Institutes: Essays and Analysis*, ed. David W. Hall and Peter A. Lillback (Phillipsburg, New Jersey: P&R Publishing, 2008), 443-5; idem, *Accepted and Renewed in Christ: The “Twofold Grace of God” and the Interpretation of Calvin’s Theology* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007), 33-52, 196-200. The “twofold grace of God” refers to justification and sanctification.

¹² See Charles Partee, *Calvin and Classical Philosophy* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1977), 66-91; idem, “Calvin’s Central Dogma Again,” 75-83.

¹³ Charles Partee, *The Theology of John Calvin*, 40.

¹⁴ *Institutes*, 1.1.1.

Nevertheless, such analyses and classification methods that pertain to the structure of the *Institutes* are open to further interrogation. Even though these classifications cover the broad outline, there is often a poverty of detailed analysis regarding scope, content, frequency, and the inter-relationship with the other theological themes.

6.1.1. The Structure of the *Institutes* from the viewpoint of the “Union with Christ” Thought

Even though Bauke expresses misgivings about Calvin’s theology having an obvious ‘form’ or ‘principle,’ he did suggest a long time ago that Calvin’s theology does feature coherence in form.¹⁵ While I do not agree completely I concede that coherence in the content and form of Calvin’s theology is to be found.

A feature of Calvin’s theology is the theological balance. Though the initiative of his theology is always ‘theology from above (*katabasis*),’ which is from the Triune God, this does not completely exclude ‘theology from below (*anabasis*),’ namely, from ourselves. On the other hand, Calvin maintains balance in his pursuit of a comprehensive, integrated, and consistent theology that includes both ‘the theology from Triune God’ and ‘the theology from ourselves.’ Calvin’s own statement contemplates the comprehensiveness of his theology, which is related to ‘the theology from above’ and ‘the theology from below,’ as follows:

Nearly all the wisdom we possess, that is to say, true and sound wisdom, consists of two parts: *the knowledge of God and of ourselves. But, while joined by many bonds, which one precedes and brings forth the other is not easy to discern...* Yet, however the knowledge of God and of ourselves may be mutually connected, the order of right teaching requires that we discuss the former first, then proceed afterward to treat the latter.¹⁶ (own emphasis).

¹⁵ Hermann Bauke, *Die Probleme der Theologie Calvins* (Leipzig: Verlag der J. C. Hinrichs’ schen Buchhandlung, 1922). For other theologians who agree, see Richard C. Gamble, “Calvin as Theologian and Exegete: Is There Anything New?” in *The Organizational Structure of Calvin’s Theology*, ed. Richard C. Gamble, 7 vols. (New York: Garland Publishing, INC, 1992). Additionally, regarding the comprehensive feature of Calvin’s theology, see the following: Oliver D. Crisp, “Calvin on Creation and Providence,” in *John Calvin and Evangelical Theology: Legacy and Prospect*, ed. Sung Wook Chung (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009), 64-5; Michael Horton, “The Principal Article of Salvation,” in *John Calvin: A Heart for Devotion Doctrine & Doxology*, ed. Burk Parsons (Lake Mary, FL: Reformation Trust Publishing, 2008), 201-2; Victor E. D’Assonville, “Exegesis and Doctrina,” in *The Calvin Handbook*, ed. Herman J. Selderhuis, trans. Judith J. Guder, Henry J. Baron, Randi H. Lundell, and Gerrit W. Sheeres (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 378-84; J. Todd Billings and I. John Hesselink, *Calvin’s Theology and Its Reception: Disputes, Developments, and New Possibilities* (Louisville, Kentucky: John Knox Press, 2012), iix.

¹⁶ *Institutes*, 1.1.1; 1.1.3.

It is our intention to make only these two points: first, that faith does not stand firm until a man attains to the freely given promise; second, that it does not reconcile us to God at all unless it joins us to Christ. Both points are worth noting... Therefore, there can be no firm condition of faith unless it rests upon God's mercy... But how can there be saying faith except in so far as it engrafts us in the body of Christ?¹⁷ (own emphasis).

From this point of view, the classification methods of 'the twofold structure as God and ourselves,' that Parker, Partee, Muller, and Venema present do evince theological discernment and persuasion. Specifically in Partee's classification method, an analysis of the structure of all the books of the *Institutes* by the doctrine of "union with Christ," is persuasive in its logic. He bestows an important theological meaning to the structure of the *Institutes* by the central axis with the following statement by Calvin:

First, we must understand that as long as Christ remains outside of us, and we are separated from him, all that he has suffered and done for the salvation of the human race remains useless and of no value for us. Therefore, to share with us what he has received from the Father, he had to become ours and to dwell within us.¹⁸

Partee divides the structure of all the books of the *Institutes* on the basis with Calvin's statement, as follows:

Part One: GOD FOR US
 Book I . God the Creator
 Book II . God the Redeemer
 Part Two: GOD WITH US
 Book III. The Faithful Person(s)
 Book IV. The Faithful Community¹⁹

Although this classification seems to pursue the existing twofold structure classification of God (Book I ~ II) and ourselves (Book III~IV)' about Calvin's theology, there has been a considerable amount of disagreement with it,²⁰ and he has since revised his

¹⁷ *Institutes*, 3.2.30.

¹⁸ *Institutes*, 3.1.1.

¹⁹ Charles Partee, *The Theology of John Calvin*, 40. For a more detailed analysis of Partee on the structure of the *Institutes*, see his treatise, "Calvin's Central Dogma Again," p. 79.

²⁰ It means that the classification of the entire books of the *Institutes* as the 'twofold structure' is divided largely into 'the knowledge of God (Book I ~ II)' and 'the knowledge of ourselves (Book III~IV).'

analysis of the structure of the *Institutes* from the viewpoint of the doctrine of “union with Christ.” While the classification method of Partee indicates theological discernment, his analysis does not seem to overcome the existing classification of the ‘twofold structure’ and its form. Partee’s statement has faithfully followed the existing classification as ‘the twofold structure as God and us’ about Calvin’s theology, as is signified by the following:

At the beginning of Book III, Calvin indicates that Book I and II dealt in some sense objectively with the knowledge of God the Creator and Redeemer while the work of God the Father revealed in Jesus Christ the Son subjectively considered is the domain of the Holy Spirit... Thus the doctrine of union with Christ seems adequate to serve as a basis for surveying the *Institutes* from a central perspective. Having created all mankind (Book I), God becomes a man, Jesus Christ, for the salvation of mankind (Book II). In Jesus Christ, *by the power of the Holy Spirit*, God enters the lives of individuals (Book III) and the life of a community (Book IV).²¹

Even though Partee insists that we should not deduce that the *Institutes* were organized as either the objective formula (God for us, Book I ~ II) nor the subjective formula (God in us, Book III~IV), he does not completely abandon the ‘twofold structure.’ This ambiguity rests on the title of Book One, the title of Chapter One, and the title of clause (or verse) one, and also its content at the beginning, as compiled by Calvin, namely:

Book One: The Knowledge of God the Creator
Chapter I : The Knowledge of God and That of Ourselves Are Connected.
How They Are Interrelated
Without knowledge of self there is no knowledge of God
Nearly all the wisdom we possess, that is to say, true and sound wisdom, consists of two parts: the knowledge of God and of ourselves. But, while joined by many bonds, which one precedes and brings forth the other is not easy to discern.²²

To sum up, although Partee has conducted his analysis with discernment and observed the *doctrine* of “union with Christ,” he has not completely transcended the existing classification of the ‘twofold structure as God and ourselves.’ In short, he has not perfectly interpreted ‘the twofold structure as God and ourselves,’ which is the structure of the *Institutes*, from the viewpoint of “union with Christ” *thought*. Seen from the viewpoint of

²¹ Charles Partee, “Calvin’s Central Dogma Again,” 78, 80.

²² *Institutes*, 1.1.1.

“union with Christ” *thought* his classification has the following theological limitations:

Firstly, although Partee has classified the structure of the *Institutes* by the *doctrine* of “union with Christ,” he has not overcome the existing frame of ‘the twofold structure of God (Book I ~ II) and ourselves (Book III~IV).’

Secondly, even though he has attempted the analysis of the structure of all the books of the *Institutes* by the doctrine of “union with Christ,” he deals with it only by its titles, general forms, and with limited explicit attention to content. In short, he has not indicated in a comprehensive and systematically that the “union with Christ” thought has a close inter-relationship with the structure of the *Institutes* (although this knowledge might be implicit).

The third limitation is that Partee approaches the structure of the *Institutes* only from the viewpoint of the *doctrine* of “union with Christ,” a viewpoint from which it is impossible to eliminate the limitation of scope as soteriology (it belongs mainly to Book III) and the doctrine of the sacrament (which belongs mainly to Book IV). Hence Partee’s structural analysis stays, in my view, within the existing classification of ‘the twofold structure as God (Book I ~ II) and ourselves (Book III~IV).’

Nevertheless, we cannot disprove that “union with Christ” has been dealt with multi-directionally in all the books of the *Institutes*. The comprehensiveness of the thought, therefore, as I have mentioned several times, resides in various parts, such as the *Institutes*’ titles, scope, contents, frequency, and the inter-relationship with the other theological themes, etc. In short, this fact means that the “union with Christ” thought bears close inter-connection to the structure of the *Institutes*. More precisely, the structure of Calvin’s theology from the viewpoint of “union with Christ” *thought* can be divided into two aspects, namely: the theological structure of “Triune God” and “ourselves,” and the structure of the thought of ‘union with the Triune God.’

6.1.1.1. The Theological Twofold Structure of “Triune God” and “Ourselves” from the viewpoint of the “Union with Christ” Thought

The theological proposition that Calvin’s theology and the structure of the *Institutes* have a close inter-relationship with ‘Trinity-centric theology’ or ‘Trinitarian-centric theology

in Christ' have continued until the present.²³ On the other hand, the argument that Calvin's theology has a theological twofold structure as "Triune God" and "ourselves," has also continued.²⁴ In a practical manner, the structure of the *Institutes* such as the "Triune God" and "ourselves" has been presented fragmentedly by the more detailed 'theological twofold structure,' which is related to the doctrine of "union with Christ," as "God does for us and with us" by Partee.²⁵

In the same manner, classifying all the books of the *Institutes* according to the theological structure of "Triune God" and "ourselves" arises from two reasons: Firstly, as mentioned before, it is because of Calvin's title of chapter one and the title of the clauses of chapter one, opening the *Institutes*: "Chapter One: The Knowledge of God and That of Ourselves Are Connected. How They Are Interrelated. Clause One: *Without knowledge of self there is no knowledge of God.*" The meaning of Calvin's first statement has a great theological meaning, for it summarizes the *Institutes*' entire frame, which becomes apparent afterwards.

This analysis has a sufficient logical basis. Calvin's next statement following immediately after the title of Chapter One verifies that fact: "Nearly all the wisdom we possess, that is to say, true and sound wisdom, consists of two parts: *the knowledge of God and of ourselves.*"²⁶ This statement also means that the structure of the *Institutes* will be treated as 'the structure of the twofold knowledge' of "God" and "ourselves." This statement

²³ Philip Walker Butin, *Revelation, Redemption, and Response: Calvin's Trinitarian Understanding of the Divine-Human Relationship* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995); Charles Partee, *The Theology of John Calvin*, 39-40; J. Todd Billings, *Calvin, Participation, and the Gift*, 102.

²⁴ Regarding Calvin's theology as having the 'twofold structure as God and ourselves,' see the following, excluding the books and treatises that I have already presented before: Peter Barth, *Calvin, Zeitwende*, 1931, 310; idem, "Fünfundzwanzig Jahre Calvinforschung 1909 bis 1934," in *Theol. Rundschau, Neue Folge VI*, 1934, 162. This book and treatise is quoted from Wilhelm Niesel, *Die Theologie Calvins* (München, Germany: Chr. Kaiser Verlag München, 1957), 17 (footnote no. 37). See also Eberhard Busch, "God and Humanity" in *The Calvin Handbook*, ed. Herman J. Selderhuis, trans. Judith J. Guder, Henry J. Baron, Randi H. Lundell, and Gerrit W. Sheeres (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 224-35; Herman J. Selderhuis, "The *Institutes*" in *The Calvin Handbook*, ed. Herman J. Selderhuis, trans. Judith J. Guder, Henry J. Baron, Randi H. Lundell, and Gerrit W. Sheeres (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 204; François Wendel, *Calvin: Sources et Evolution de sa Pensée Religieuse* (Paris: Presses Universitaire de France, 1950), 111-2; Richard C. Gamble, "Calvin as Theologian and Exegete: Is There Anything New?" 44-60; Ford Lewis Battles, *Interpreting John Calvin*, ed. Robert Benedetto (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 1996), 149-50; I. John Hesselink, "Ford Lewis Battles: The Catholic Calvinian," by Ford Lewis Battles, in *Interpreting John Calvin*, ed. Robert Benedetto (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 1996), 31; J. Todd Billings, *Calvin, Participation, and the Gift*, 14-67; I. John Hesselink, *Calvin's First Catechism: A Commentary* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997), 44-5; Herman J. Selderhuis, *Calvin's Theology of the Psalms* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2007), 38; John W. De Gruchy, *John Calvin: Christian Humanist & Evangelical Reformer* (Wellington: Lux Verbi.BM, 2009), 120-2.

²⁵ Charles Partee, *The Theology of John Calvin* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2008), 40-3. For a similar viewpoint to that of Partee, see Andrew Purves and Mark Achemeier, *Union in Christ: A Declaration for the Church* (Louisville: Witherspoon Press, 1999).

²⁶ *Institutes*, 1.1.1.

concerning the structure of the *Institutes* has been the focus of John T. McNeill: he declares his interpretation that is related to “knowledge” in the title of chapter one of the *Institutes*, which he edited himself, as the following:

The word “knowledge” in the title, chosen rather than “being” or “existence” of God, emphasizes the centrality of revelation *in both the structure and the content* of Calvin’s theology²⁷ (own emphasis).

I completely agree with McNeill; Calvin’s twofold knowledge of “God” and “ourselves” has a close inter-relationship both with the structure and the content of his theology. This is very important to the theological work that interprets and evaluates Calvin’s theology, for this meaning of ‘the twofold knowledge’ of “God” and “ourselves” is closely inter-connected to the structure, content, core thought (or central thought), form, feature, and also “union with Christ” thought in Calvin’s theology.

In particular, the twofold knowledge of “God” and “ourselves” reveals the structure of the *Institutes* of Calvin. This is borne out by Calvin’s following statement:

Yet, however the knowledge of God and of ourselves may be mutually connected, *the order of right teaching* requires that we discuss the former first, then proceed afterward to treat the latter²⁸ (own emphasis).

In practical terms, an analysis of the structural order of the *Institutes* which proceeds only by the titles of each book, shows that it is composed along the lines of the twofold structure of “God” (Book I : God the Creator, Book II : God the Redeemer) and “ourselves” (Book III: We who receive the Grace of Christ, Book IV: We who has been become the Society of Christ). This structure also coincides exactly with the above statement of Calvin. Therefore, the structure of the *Institutes* was undoubtedly composed according to the twofold theological structure of “God” and “ourselves.”

Secondly, to classify all the books of the *Institutes* as “Triune God” and “ourselves” inter-relates profoundly with its content. Not only the titles of each book of the *Institutes* were composed by the twofold structure of “God” and “ourselves,” the contents of each clause and chapter of each book follow the same structure.²⁹ For example, if we look only at

²⁷ John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed., John T. McNeill, trans., Ford Lewis Battles, 2 vols., Library of Christian Classics Series nos. 20-1, (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1960), 35.

²⁸ *Institutes*, 1.1.3.

²⁹ Even though only titles of each Chapter of Book Four of the *Institutes* suggest this twofold

the titles of each chapter of Book One and Book Two of the *Institutes*, we will definitely recognize that it was composed by the theological twofold structure of “God” and “ourselves,” as follows:

Book One: The Knowledge of *God the Creator*

Chapter 1: The Knowledge of *God* and That of *Ourselves* Are Connected. How They Are Interrelated

Chapter 2: What It Is to Know *God*, and to What Purpose the Knowledge of *Him* Tends

Chapter 3: The Knowledge of *God* Has Been Naturally Implanted in the Minds of *Man*

Chapter 4: This Knowledge Is Either Smothered or Corrupted, Partly by Ignorance, Partly by Malice

Chapter 5: The Knowledge of *God* Shines Forth in the Fashioning of the Universe and the Continuing Government of It

Chapter 6: Scripture Is Needed as Guide and Teacher for **Anyone** Who Would Come to *God the Creator*

Chapter 7: Scripture Must Be Confirmed by the Witness of *the Spirit*. Thus May Its Authority Be Established as Certain; and It Is a Wicked Falsehood that Its Credibility Depends on the Judgment of *the Church*

Chapter 8: So Far as *Human* Reason Goes, Sufficiently Firm Proofs Are at Hand to Establish the Credibility of Scripture

Chapter 9: Fanatics, Abandoning Scripture and Flying Over to Revelation, Cast Down All the Principles of Godliness

Chapter 10: Scripture, to Correct All Superstition, Has Set *the True God* Alone Over Against All the Gods of the Heathen

Chapter 11: It Is Unlawful to Attribute a Visible Form to *God*, and Generally Whoever Sets Up Idols Revolts Against *the True God*

Chapter 12: How *God* Is to Be So Distinguished from Idols that Perfect Honor May Be Given to *Him* Alone

Chapter 13: In Scripture, from the Creation Onward, *We* Are Taught One Essence of *God*, Which Contains Three Persons

Chapter 14: Even in the Creation of the Universe and of All Things, Scripture by Unmistakable Marks Distinguished *the True God* from False Gods

Chapter 15: Discussion of *Human Nature* as Created, of the Faculties of the Soul, of the Image of *God*, of Free Will, and of the Original Integrity of *Man's Nature*

Chapter 16: *God* by His Power Nourishes and Maintains the World Created by *Him*, and Rules Its Several Parts by His Providence

Chapter 17: How *We* May Apply This Doctrine to *Our Greatest Benefit*

Chapter 18: *God* So Uses the Works of the Ungodly, and So Bends Their Minds to Carry Out His Judgments, that He Remains Pure from Every Stain

structure, if the titles of each clause and the whole content are considered, the twofold structure of “Triune God” and “ourselves” is also certainly located in Book Four of the *Institutes*.

Book Two: The Knowledge of *God the Redeemer in Christ*, First Disclosed to the *Fathers* Under the Law, and Then to *Us* in the Gospel
 Chapter 1: By the Fall and Revolt of Adam *the Whole Human Race* Was Delivered to the Curse, and Degenerated from Its Original Condition; the Doctrine of Original Sin
 Chapter 2: *Man* Has Now Been Deprived of Freedom of Choice and Bound Over to Miserable Servitude
 Chapter 3: Only Damnable Things Come Forth from *Man's* Corrupt Nature
 Chapter 4: How *God* Works in *Men's Hearts*
 Chapter 5: Refutation of the Objections Commonly Put Forward in Defense of Free Will
 Chapter 6: *Fallen Man* Ought to Seek Redemption in *Christ*
 Chapter 7: The Law Was Given, Not to Restrain the Folk of the Old Covenant Under Itself, but to Foster Hope of Salvation in *Christ* Until His Coming
 Chapter 8: Explanation of the Moral Law (the Ten Commandments)
 Chapter 9: *Christ*, Although *He* Was Known to the Jews Under the Law, Was at Length Clearly Revealed Only in the Gospel
 Chapter 10: The Similarity of the Old and New Testaments
 Chapter 11: The Difference Between the Two Testaments
 Chapter 12: *Christ* Had to Become *Man* in Order to Fulfill the Office of *Mediator*
 Chapter 13: *Christ* Assumed the True Substance of *Human* Flesh
 Chapter 14: How the *Two Natures of the Mediator* Make One Person
 Chapter 15: To Know the Purpose for Which *Christ* Was Sent by *the Father*, and What he Conferred Upon *Us*, We Must Look Above All at Three Things in *Him*: the Prophetic Office, Kingship, and Priesthood
 Chapter 16: How *Christ* Has Fulfilled the Function of *Redeemer* to Acquire Salvation for *Us*. Here, Also, *His Death and Resurrection* Are Discussed, as Well as *His Ascent* Into Heaven
 Chapter 17: *Christ* Rightly and Properly Said to Have Merited *God's* Grace and Salvation for *Us*³⁰ (own emphasis).

In the same manner, what is the significance of the titles (of each clause and chapter of each book of the *Institutes*) having a close inter-relationship with the twofold structure of “God” and “ourselves”? It means that the *Institutes* is composed by the theological twofold structure of “God” and “ourselves,” not only in the titles but also in the content. This is the point that I want to emphasize, in contrast to the theologians mentioned previously.

The content of all the books of the *Institutes* has been dealt with by the theological twofold structure of “God” and “ourselves” from the beginning to the end. This means that

³⁰ *Institutes*, the Book One and the Book Two.

the content of the *Institutes* are developed thoroughly according to the theological formula that deals with “God” and “ourselves” together, not individually, as “God” or “ourselves.” Calvin is also not dealing only with the transcendental God when he writes about “the knowledge of God;” he is referring also to the immanent God who is for us, in us, and with us. In the same manner, even when dealing with “the knowledge of ourselves,” he treats it within the close inter-relationship with the Triune God. That is the decisive reason that the “union with Christ” thought is dealt with comprehensively in all the books of the *Institutes*.

Nevertheless, when viewed in more detail, it is the more exact classification that divides the *Institutes* into the twofold structure of “Triune God and ourselves,” rather than merely the twofold ‘God and ourselves,’ for Calvin has thoroughly pursued a Trinity-centric theology or Trinitarian-centric theology in Christ, of which an example would be the doctrine of the Creation.³¹

Even though Calvin writes about God the Creator as having a relationship with us in the doctrine of Creation, at the same time he also treats it together with Christ and the Holy Spirit. In this way the doctrine of Creation involves not only God the Father, but also God the Son and God the Holy Spirit as being in a relationship with us.³² By similar formulae, Calvin frequently deals with the various theological themes in the twofold structure of “Triune God” and “ourselves.”³³ This is also one of the core reasons that the “union with Christ” thought is treated so comprehensively in the various theological themes.

Similarly, concerning the content of the entire *Institutes*, the theological twofold structure of ‘Triune God and ourselves’ again becomes apparent; for if the content of Book One is about ‘God the Father and ourselves’ and Book Two is about ‘God the Redeemer and

³¹ Regarding the inter-connection between Calvin’s doctrine of the Creation and “union with Christ,” see the following: Oliver D. Crisp, “Calvin on Creation and Providence,” 62-5; Michael Horton, *The Christian Faith: A Systematic Theology for Pilgrims on the Way* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2011), 392-3; John Murray, *Redemption: Accomplished and Applied* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1980), 163; J. Todd Billings, “John Calvin: United to God through Christ,” in *Partakers of the Divine Nature: The History and Development of Deification in the Christian Traditions*, ed. Michael J. Christensen and Jeffery A. Wittung (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2007), 203; Stanley J. Grenz, *The Social God and Relational Self: A Trinitarian Theology of the Imago Dei* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 162; J. Todd Billings, *Union with Christ: Reframing Theology and Ministry for the Church* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2011), 65; Charles Partee, *The Theology of John Calvin*, 81-9, 167; J. Todd Billings, *Calvin, Participation, and the Gift*, 16-42; Kevin Dixon Kennedy, *Union with Christ and the Extent of the Atonement in Calvin* (New York: Peter Lang, 2002), 153; Julie Canlis, *Calvin’s Ladder: A Spiritual Theology of Ascent and Ascension* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2010), 53-88; Robert Letham, *Union with Christ: In Scripture, History, and Theology* (Phillipsburg, New Jersey: P&R Publishing, 2011), 9-18; Lambert M. Surhone, Mariam T. Tennoe, and Susan F. Henssonow, *Union with Christ* (U.S.A.: Betascript Publishing, 2011), 2.

³² *Institutes*, 1.2.1, 1.13.7, 1.15.3; 1.15.4; 1.15.5; 1.15.6; 2.1.5; 2.2.1; 2.12.5; 2.12.6; 3.11.7; *Comm.* on Ps. 139:15; *Comm.* on Jn. 3:3; *Comm.* on Ac. 17: 26-29; *Comm.* on Ro. 6:21.

³³ *Institutes*, 1.1.1; 1.1.2; 1.2.1; 1.9.1; 1.9.3; 1.12.1; 1.13.9; 1.13.13; 1.15.1; 2.1.1; 2.2.18; 2.6.1; 2.6.4; 2.8.1; 2.16.19; 3.1.1; 3.2.6; 3.11.5; 4.15.6; *Comm.* on Ge. Argument; *Comm.* on Ac. 17:28.

ourselves,’ the contents of Books Three and Four reveal a close inter-relationship with God the Holy Spirit. That fact is exposed in the following statement by Hesselink:

For Calvin, from the beginning to the end the Christian life is made possible by God’s Grace as it is experienced by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. *The overarching theme of Books III and IV of the Institutes is the work of the Holy Spirit*: in Books III in relation to faith and regeneration (repentance as a continual process), in Books IV in relation to the church and sacraments³⁴ (own emphasis).

I agree with the analysis of Hesselink that Books Three and Four have a close inter-relationship with God the Holy Spirit. Thus the *Institutes* features not only the twofold structure of the ‘Triune God and ourselves’ in the structural aspect, but also in the aspect of content. In short, it means that the theological twofold form of the ‘Triune God and ourselves’ is distributed completely throughout the structure and the content of the whole of the *Institutes*. This can be represented as follows:

Part One: *GOD FOR US*

Book I . *God the Creator and ourselves*

Book II . *God the Redeemer and ourselves*

Part Two: *GOD WITH US*

Book III. *We who receive the Grace of Christ through the Holy Spirit*

Book IV. *We who has been become the Community of Christ through the Holy Spirit*

Even though this classified method is influenced by Partee, I analyzed the classification of the theological twofold form as ‘Triune God and ourselves’ from the viewpoint of the “union with Christ” thought. In the same manner, Calvin’s theology inter-relates with the theological twofold structure of ‘Triune God and ourselves’ both in the aspects of structure and content. Nevertheless, as Calvin himself mentioned, the priority and the dynamic direction of the twofold structure derives completely from the Triune God.³⁵

This twofold structure has had a very close inter-connection with “union with Christ” thought, which has been revealed as a core thought of Calvin’s theology. In other words, “union with Christ” thought refers thoroughly to the intimate relationship between the

³⁴ I. John Hesselink, “Pneumatology,” in *The Calvin Handbook*, ed. Herman J. Selderhuis, trans. Judith J. Guder, Henry J. Baron, Randi H. Lundell, and Gerrit W. Sheeres (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 304.

³⁵ *Institutes*, 1.1.3.

Triune God and us as believers. The theological twofold structure of the *Institutes* of the ‘Triune God and ourselves,’ therefore, is related inseparably to the “union with Christ” thought. Additionally, it is a determining reason that the “union with Christ” thought features so prominently throughout the entire theological works of Calvin.

6.1.1.2. The Theological Structure and Scope of the ‘Union with the Triune God’ Thought

As I have emphasized, the “union with Christ” thought features in Calvin’s theology in various guises; the comprehensiveness of the various ‘metaphorical expressions,’ of the various ‘theological meanings,’ of the aspect of the scope in terms of volume and the content, all related to the theological theme or meaning. These understandings of “union with Christ” have emerged more markedly in the *Institutes*, where this thought appears multi-directionally, together with its various theological themes, and by various metaphorical expressions.

In the same manner, it is profoundly related to the issue at hand, viz. that one of the features of “union with Christ” thought is the comprehensiveness with which it is treated in the *Institutes*, and the theological twofold structure of ‘Triune God and ourselves.’ In other words, “union with Christ” has been dealt with not only as regarding Christ, but also in the intimate relationship with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit, namely, the Triune God, and us as believers. The “union with Christ” thought and the structure of the *Institutes* are closely related.

From this point of view, “union with Christ” becomes interchangeable with ‘union with the Triune God.’ So that the ‘union with the Triune God’ thought is a core thought in Calvin’s theology, closely related to the structure or content of the *Institutes*.

I have mentioned the insistence that the structure of the *Institutes* relates to Trinity-centric theology or Trinitarian-centric theology in Christ. This inter-relationship is completely relevant to the insistence that Calvin’s theology is Holy Spirit-centric (or Pneumatological Trinity-centric) or Christ-centric theology.³⁶ It has also been emphasized that the *Institutes* may be classified as ‘the theological twofold structure of the Triune God and ourselves;’ that is, it refers to the close inter-relationship between its structure and the “union with Christ” thought, for the intimate relationship between the Triune God and us is the central content of

³⁶ For the argument that Calvin’s theology is Trinity-centric or Trinitarian-centric theology in Christ, see ‘Research Methodology’ of Chapter One (the Introduction) of this dissertation.

the “union with Christ” thought.

In the same manner, if “union with Christ” can be alternated with ‘union with Triune God,’ and if the idea also has a close inter-relationship with the *Institutes*’ structure, content, and scope, what does it mean? It means that the structure and content of the *Institutes* is closely related to ‘union with Triune God’ thought.

According to my analysis, the ‘union with Triune God’ thought has been dealt with comprehensively and interchangeably by the various metaphorical expressions of the ‘union with God’ thought, ‘union with the Holy Spirit’ thought, and “union with Christ” thought, in all the books of the *Institutes*. The following comparison chart is the spread of distribution of the various metaphorical expressions of the ‘union with Triune God’ thought in the *Institutes*:

The Sorts of the Union Thought	The Spread of Distribution of the ‘Union with Triune God’ Thought in the <i>Institutes</i>
‘Union with God’ thought	<i>Institutes</i> , 1.5.3; 1.5.5; 1.5.6; 1.7.4; 1.12.1; 1.13.15; 1.13.16; 1.13.24; 1.13.26; 1.15.6; 1.18.2; 2.1.5; 2.2.1; 2.3.6; 2.3.9; 2.3.10; 2.8.13; 2.8.18; 2.8.29; 2.8.30; 2.8.31; 2.8.34; 2.8.40; 2.8.51; 2.10.2; 2.10.7; 2.10.8; 2.10.15; 2.11.11; 2.12.1; 2.12.5; 2.12.6; 2.14.3; 2.15.4; 2.15.5; 2.16.3; 2.16.14; 3.1.1; 3.1.2; 3.6.2; 3.7.3; 3.11.1; 3.11.5; 3.11.6; 3.11.8; 3.11.9; 3.11.12; 3.11.21; 3.11.23; 3.13.9; 3.13.18; 3.14.6; 3.14.9; 3.14.18; 3.15.6; 3.17.5; 3.17.6; 3.18.3; 3.23.14; 3.24.1; 3.24.2; 3.25.2; 3.25.10; 4.1.2; 4.1.3; 4.1.20; 4.6.5; 4.17.33; 4.17.42; 4.20.2; 4.20.4.
‘Union with the Holy Spirit’ thought	<i>Institutes</i> , 1.7.4; 1.7.5; 1.8.13; 1.9.2; 1.13.14; 1.15.4; 1.15.5; 1.18.2; 2.2.16; 2.3.1; 2.3.6; 2.3.8; 2.3.10; 2.5.15; 2.7.11; 2.8.34; 2.10.23; 2.11.10; 2.12.1; 2.12.2; 2.16.16; 3.1.1; 3.1.2; 3.1.3; 3.1.4; 3.2.1; 3.2.8; 3.2.12; 3.2.24; 3.2.33; 3.2.34; 3.2.35; 3.2.36; 3.2.39; 3.3.14; 3.4.20; 3.11.5; 3.11.9; 3.11.12; 3.13.9; 3.13.18; 3.14.9; 3.14.19; 3.17.5; 3.17.6; 3.24.2; 4.1.2; 4.1.3; 4.1.6; 4.14.9; 4.14.16; 4.15.5; 4.15.6; 4.17.1; 4.17.8; 4.17.10; 4.17.11; 4.17.12; 4.17.18; 4.17.31; 4.17.33; 4.19.6.
“Union with Christ”	<i>Institutes</i> , 1.2.1; 1.13.7; 1.13.26; 1.14.12; 1.14.18; 2.3.9; 2.3.10; 2.3.11; 2.6.1; 2.8.18; 2.8.23; 2.8.30; 2.8.51; 2.8.57; 2.9.3; 2.9.4; 2.10.2; 2.10.7; 2.10.15; 2.11.11; 2.12.1; 2.12.2; 2.12.3; 2.12.4; 2.12.5; 2.12.6; 2.12.7; 2.13.1; 2.13.2; 2.13.4; 2.14.3; 2.14.4; 2.14.5; 2.15.1; 2.15.3; 2.15.4; 2.15.6; 2.16.3; 2.16.7; 2.16.9; 2.16.13; 2.16.14; 2.16.16; 2.16.19; 2.17.1; 2.17.2; 2.17.5; 3.1.1; 3.1.2; 3.1.3; 3.1.4; 3.2.1; 3.2.8; 3.2.13; 3.2.24; 3.2.30; 3.2.33; 3.2.35; 3.2.39; 3.3.1; 3.3.9; 3.3.14; 3.3.19; 3.3.20; 3.3.23; 3.3.28; 3.5.2; 3.5.3; 3.6.2; 3.6.3; 3.7.1; 3.7.2; 3.8.1; 3.8.7; 3.9.6; 3.11.1; 3.11.3; 3.11.4; 3.11.5; 3.11.6; 3.11.7; 3.11.8; 3.11.9; 3.11.10; 3.11.11; 3.11.12; 3.11.21; 3.11.22; 3.11.23; 3.13.5; 3.14.4; 3.14.9; 3.14.18; 3.15.5; 3.15.6; 3.15.8; 3.16.1; 3.16.2;

thought	3.17.5; 3.17.6; 3.17.10; 3.17.11; 3.18.3; 3.20.1; 3.20.19; 3.20.21; 3.20.29; 3.20.36; 3.20.42; 3.21.7; 3.22.6; 3.22.7; 3.24.1; 3.24.2; 3.24.5; 3.24.6; 3.25.3; 3.25.10; 4.1.2; 4.1.3; 4.1.20; 4.1.21; 4.2.5; 4.2.6; 4.3.1; 4.3.2; 4.6.5; 4.6.9; 4.6.10; 4.6.17; 4.7.21; 4.7.24; 4.8.1; 4.8.11; 4.11.2; 4.12.5; 4.12.24; 4.14.7; 4.14.14; 4.14.15; 4.14.16; 4.15.1; 4.15.5; 4.15.6; 4.15.15; 4.15.16; 4.15.22; 4.16.2; 4.16.7; 4.16.17; 4.16.18; 4.16.21; 4.16.22; 4.16.31; 4.17.1; 4.17.2; 4.17.4; 4.17.5; 4.17.6; 4.17.7; 4.17.8; 4.17.9; 4.17.10; 4.17.11; 4.17.12; 4.17.13; 4.17.14; 4.17.15; 4.17.16; 4.17.18; 4.17.19; 4.17.20; 4.17.21; 4.17.22; 4.17.24; 4.17.26; 4.17.28; 4.17.29; 4.17.30; 4.17.31; 4.17.32; 4.17.33; 4.17.34; 4.17.38; 4.17.40; 4.17.42; 4.17.44; 4.17.45; 4.18.8; 4.18.10; 4.18.17; 4.19.3; 4.19.8; 4.19.16; 4.19.25; 4.19.28; 4.19.35; 4.19.36; 4.20.2.
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The Comprehensiveness of the Various Metaphorical Expressions
of the ‘Union with Triune God’ thought in the *Institutes*

In the same manner, the interchangeable versions of the thought have been dealt with sometimes by the unitary or union formula that deals with ‘union with the one person of the Triune God’ and us, and sometimes by the complex union formula that deals with ‘union with the two persons or all three the persons of the Triune God’ and us.³⁷ ‘Union with Triune God’ echoes through the whole of the *Institutes* by those formulae; that is, in close relationship to the thought and the structure of the *Institutes*.

In more detail, if seen from the theological structure and scope of all the books of the *Institutes* and the viewpoint of ‘union with Triune God’ thought, we discover that it is closely inter-related to the thought’s scope or its quantitative frequency and the structure of the *Institutes*: Firstly, “The Knowledge of God the Creator” of Book One of the *Institutes* comprises a total of 18 chapters, and the ‘union with Triune God’ thought is dealt with in 9 of these chapters. From these, the “union with God” thought is dealt with in a total of 6 chapters, ‘union with the Holy Spirit’ thought in a total of 5 chapters, and “union with Christ” in a total of 3 chapters.³⁸

Secondly, “The Knowledge of God the Redeemer in Christ” of Book Two of the *Institutes* comprises a total of 17 chapters, and ‘union with Triune God’ has been dealt with in 16 of these chapters. This scope of the ‘union with the Triune God’ thought is very extensive. In practice, the thought is dealt with in all the chapters of Book Two of the *Institutes*, except in chapter four. But judging from the title of Chapter Four of Book Two of the *Institutes*,

³⁷ Regarding the feature of the ‘union with Triune God’ thought, see the section on ‘Trinitarian union’ of Chapter Five of this dissertation.

³⁸ Regarding the ‘union with Triune God’ thought’s scope or its quantitative frequency in all the books of the *Institutes*, see the above comparison chart.

“*How God Works in Men’s Hearts*,” eventually, Chapter Four is also not irrelevant to the ‘union with Triune God’ thought. Even though there are no a direct metaphorical expressions of the thought in Chapter Four, we can say that there has somehow been an inter-relationship between Chapter Four and the thought in the aspect of its content and meaning.

From this point of view, the *Institutes*’ other chapters and the contents, which do not contain the metaphorical expressions of ‘union with Triune God’ thought, is the same as that mentioned previously. From these, “union with God” has been dealt with in a total of 10 chapters, the ‘union with the Holy Spirit’ thought in a total of 9 chapters, and the “union with Christ” thought in a total of 12 chapters.

Thirdly, “The Way in Which We Receive the Grace of Christ” of Book Three of the *Institutes* covers a total of 25 chapters, and ‘union with Triune God’ thought has been dealt with in 22 of these. This quantitative scope of the ‘union with Triune God’ thought in Book Three is also extensive, similar to Book Two, for the thought has been dealt with in almost all of the chapters of Book Three of the *Institutes*, with the exception of chapters ten, twelve, and nineteen. Of these chapters, the “union with God” thought has been dealt with in a total of 12 chapters, the ‘union with the Holy Spirit’ thought in a total of 9 chapters, and the “union with Christ” thought in a total of 20 chapters.

Fourthly, “The External Means or Aids by Which God Invites Us into the Society of Christ and Holds Us Therein” in Book Three of the *Institutes* comprises a total of 20 chapters, and ‘union with Triune God’ thought has been dealt with in 15 of these chapters by the various metaphorical expressions. This quantitative scope of ‘union with Triune God’ thought in Book Four is also extensive, as was the case with Book Two and Book Three.

Additionally, the quantitative frequency of the thought is the most numerous of all the books of the *Institutes*. The ‘union with Triune God’ thought has thus been comprehensively dealt with in almost all of the chapters of Book Four of the *Institutes*, except in chapters four, five, nine, ten, and thirteen. In more detail, the “union with God” thought features in a total of 4 of these chapters, the ‘union with the Holy Spirit’ thought in a total of 4 chapters, and the “union with Christ” thought in a total of 15 chapters.

There is an obvious close inter-relationship between the ‘union with Triune God’ thought and the structure, content, and scope of the *Institutes*. If seen from this viewpoint of ‘union with Triune God,’ a period has now begun of re-evaluation of Hermann Bauke and the other theologians who deny that Calvin’s theology has some obvious ‘form’ or ‘principle.’

In addition, maybe Charles Partee and the other theologians’ insistence that we cannot be sure that Calvin organized the structure of the *Institutes* deliberately centering

around “union with Christ” should also be revised (although one can understand their emphasis and motivation).³⁹ We can now also challenge the denial of a core thought in Calvin’s theology, and the conviction that other theological themes beside the “union with Christ” thought are central to his theology.⁴⁰

The close inter-relationship between the structure and scope of the *Institutes* and ‘union with Triune God’ thought results from the following evidence and convictions: Firstly, Calvin states this directly, emphasizing ‘the theological twofold form as God and ourselves’ several times. Of course, the twofold form is also very closely related to ‘union with Triune God.’ In more detail, Calvin has previously indicated how his theology would be organized, opening the first door of the *Institutes*; for example, he states that his theology will be formed by ‘the theological twofold form as God and ourselves,’ in Book One’s chapter one, which was composed of three clauses, as follows:

The knowledge of God and that of ourselves are connected. How they are interrelated? Without knowledge of self there is no knowledge of God. *Nearly all the wisdom we possess, that is to say, true and sound wisdom, consists of two parts...* Without knowledge of God there is no knowledge of self. Again, it is certain that man never achieves a clear knowledge of himself *unless he has first looked upon God’s face, and then descends from contemplating him to scrutinize himself...* Yet, however the knowledge of God and of ourselves may be mutually connected, *the order of right teaching requires that we discuss the former first, then proceed afterward to treat the latter*⁴¹ (own emphasis).

In a practical manner, Calvin’s statements have been verified in that the *Institutes* was composed according to the twofold structure, namely; “Triune God” (Book I : God the

³⁹ For Partee’s insistence on this part, see the following: Charles Partee, “Calvin’s Central Dogma Again,” 78-83; idem, *The Theology of John Calvin*, 42-3. Also, for the other theologians’ arguments on this part, see the following: William J. Bouwsma, “Calvin and the Renaissance Crisis of Knowing,” *Calvin Theological Journal* 17 (Nov. 1982): 190-211; Mark A. Garcia, *Life in Christ: Union with Christ and Twofold Grace in Calvin’s Theology* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock, 2008), 18; J. Todd Billings, *Calvin, Participation, and the Gift*, 19.

⁴⁰ For the insistence that “union with Christ” is a *core thought* of Calvin’s theology, see Chapter Six of this dissertation. For the other various insistences on the *central doctrine* of Calvin’s theology, see the following books: The glory of God - Otto Ritschl, *Dogmengeschichte des Protestantismus*, vol. III, Göttingen, 1926; The absolute sovereignty of God - Louis Berkhof, *Introduction to Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1979), 80; Anthropology - T. F. Torrance, *Calvin’s Doctrine of Man* (London: Lutterworth, 1949); The knowledge of God or the knowledge of God and ourselves - T. H. L. Parker, *Calvin’s Doctrine of the Knowledge of God*; Edward A. Dowey, Jr., *The Knowledge of God in Calvin’s Theology*; Pneumatology - Werner Krusche, *Das Wirken des Heiligen Geistes nach Calvin* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1957); Christology - E. David Willis, *Calvin’s Catholic Christology* (Leiden: Brill, 1966); Union with Christ - Charles Partee, *Calvin’s Central Dogma Again*; idem, *The Theology of John Calvin*.

⁴¹ *Institutes*, 1.1.1; 1.1.2; 1.1.3.

Creator, Book II: God the Redeemer) and “ourselves” (Book III: We who receive the Grace of Christ, Book IV: We who has been become the Society of Christ). The importance is that ‘the theological twofold form as Triune God and ourselves’ has been seen to have a very close inter-relationship with ‘union with Triune God.’ From this point of view, there is a close inter-connection between the structure of the *Institutes* and the ‘union with Triune God’ thought.

Secondly, the reason for insisting that there is a close inter-relationship between the structure of the *Institutes* and the ‘union with Triune God’ thought is found in its content and scope. In more detail, the ‘union with Triune God’ thought has been dealt with extensively by the various metaphorical expressions of more than 150 different words, in the *Institutes* alone. In addition, the thought has also been treated together with the various theological themes in almost all of the chapters of the entire books of the *Institutes*. From the viewpoint of the ‘content’ and ‘scope,’ therefore, the ‘union with Triune God’ thought has also had a close inter-relationship with the structure of the *Institutes*.

Thirdly, there is the close inter-relationship between the structure of the *Institutes* and ‘union with Triune God’ thought, because Calvin has thoroughly pursued ‘the theological twofold form as Triune God and ourselves.’⁴² Calvin faithfully follows the classical Trinitarian thought, in developing his theology.⁴³ This fact is verified through the writings of the Church Fathers having frequently been quoted in the *Institutes*.

Even though Calvin’s work reveals influence of medieval theologian Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153), he has been influenced mostly by the Church Fathers. Of course, Calvin did not accept unconditionally all of patristic thought; however, he was affected theologically, and his quotations focused on the Church Fathers.⁴⁴

⁴² For the close inter-relationship between ‘Trinity-centric theology’ and ‘union with Triune God’ thought, see ‘Research Methodology’ of the Chapter One (Introduction) and ‘More Direct Biblical Notion of the Metaphorical Expressions’ of Chapter Four of this dissertation.

⁴³ Regarding the inter-connection between Calvin’s theology and the classical Trinitarian thought, see ‘Trinitarian Union’ of Chapter Five of this dissertation.

⁴⁴ About the inter-connection between Calvin’s theology and the Church Fathers, see as the following books and treatises: Irena Backus, “Calvin and the Church Fathers,” in *The Calvin Handbook*, ed. Herman J. Selderhuis, trans. Judith J. Guder, Henry J. Baron, Randi H. Lundell, and Gerrit W. Sheeres (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 125-37; Alister E. McGrath, “Foreword: Why Contemporary Evangelicalism Needs to Heed John Calvin,” in *John Calvin and Evangelical Theology: Legacy and Prospect*, ed. Sung Wook Chung (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009), x-xi; William S. Barker, “The Historical Context of the *Institutes* as a Work in Theology,” in *Theological Guide To Calvin’s Institutes: Essays and Analysis*, ed. David W. Hall and Peter A. Lillback (Phillipsburg, New Jersey: P&R Publishing, 2008), 4-7; R. Ward Holder, “Tradition and Renewal,” in *The Calvin Handbook*, ed. Herman J. Selderhuis, trans. Judith J. Guder, Henry J. Baron, Randi H. Lundell, and Gerrit W. Sheeres (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 385-6; Joel R. Beeke, *Living for God’s Glory: An Introduction to Calvinism* (Lake Mary, FL: Reformation Trust Publishing, 2008), 38-9; T. H. L. Parker, *Calvin:*

In the same manner, Calvin quotes the writings of the Church Fathers frequently, also when he deals with the content related to the ‘union with Triune God’ thought. At that time, the Church Fathers whom Calvin quotes most, are Augustine (354-430), Irenaeus (130-circa 200), and Cyril of Alexandria (375-444).⁴⁵ On the other hand, Calvin has thoroughly pursued a Bible-centric theology.⁴⁶ From this point of view, his *Institutes* represent the highest pinnacle of systematic theological works, by combining the Scriptures and patristic theology with Trinitarian thought.

Nevertheless, as I have mentioned before, the *Institutes* of Calvin have been developed thoroughly by ‘the theological twofold form as Triune God and ourselves,’ not individually by “God” or “ourselves.” This twofold form is closely connected to the core content of ‘union with Triune God’ thought. Therefore, there is the close inter-relationship between the structure of the *Institutes* and ‘union with Triune God’ thought and ‘the theological twofold form as Triune God and ourselves.’

An Introduction to His Thought, 3; J. Todd Billings, “John Calvin: United to God through Christ,” 202; idem, *Calvin, Participation, and the Gift*, 16-7, 42; idem, “Union with Christ and the Double Grace: Calvin’s Theology and Its Early Reception,” 57; Michael S. Horton, “Calvin’s Theology of Union with Christ and the Double Grace: Modern Reception and Contemporary Possibilities,” in *Calvin’s Theology and Its Reception: Disputes, Developments, and New Possibilities*, ed. J. Todd Billings and I. John Hesselink (Louisville, Kentucky: John Knox Press, 2012), 88.

⁴⁵ J. Todd Billings, “John Calvin: United to God through Christ,” 200-17.

⁴⁶ For the insistences that Calvin’s theology is a ‘bible-centric theology,’ and Calvin is a ‘bible-centric theologian,’ see ‘Conceptual Clarification and Related Research’ in Chapter One (Introduction) of this dissertation. Additionally, regarding the connection between the *Institutes* and the Scriptures (or commentaries), see ‘Metaphorical Expressions of more Direct Biblical Notions’ in Chapter Four of this dissertation.

CHAPTER SEVEN

The Doctrinal Scope of the “Union with Christ” Thought in Calvin’s Theology

I have emphasized that the purpose of this research is to analyze the scope and the theological role of the “union with Christ (*unio cum Christ*)” thought, which Calvin deals with comprehensively in his theology. According to my observations the scope and the theological role of “union with Christ” thought in Calvin’s theology have been dealt with sufficiently. In particular, the varieties of comprehensiveness of the thought and its theological meanings, which formed the focus of Part Two, provide decisive ground to verify that it functions as a core thought in Calvin’s theology. In addition, the very close inter-relationship between the “union with Christ” thought and the structure of Calvin’s theology, as dealt with in Chapter Six, further confirmed the central role it occupies in his theology.

In order to answer how “union with Christ” becomes a core thought in Calvin’s theology more definitely, demands analysis of the inter-relationships between the thought and various doctrines. Simply being related to several doctrines, would not be sufficient to qualify this as a core thought; Chapter Five has explored the inter-relationship between the metaphorical expressions of “union with Christ” and the various doctrines (or theological themes). This was done by giving priority to the various metaphorical expressions of “union with Christ” thought, rather than to the inter-relationship between the thought and various doctrines. Therefore, even though the comprehensiveness of the various doctrines related to “union with Christ” were briefly presented in Chapter Five, the thought’s detailed doctrinal scope, theological role as a core thought, and its meaning in Calvin’s theology requires further scrutiny.

In this chapter, I will analyze the detailed scope of the doctrines related to “union with Christ” in Calvin’s theology, mainly by examining the whole of the *Institutes*. Firstly I will examine the issue of the central thought in Calvin’s theology, and the theological importance of the “union with Christ” thought and subsequently I will deal with the inter-relationship between the “union with Christ” thought and the various doctrines found in the *Institutes*. Finally, I will examine the detailed doctrinal scope of the thought in the *Institutes*.

This research aims to contribute to theological work that reinterprets and re-applies

Calvin's theology, with reference to the doctrinal scope of the "union with Christ" thought in the *Institutes*. In particular, if we accede that the influence of Calvin's theology has been profound in Reformed Theology until the present, such a new evaluation and interpretation of his theology will offer us significant theological insights. These research findings will also present various benefits of the applications to our theology and faith if the numerous doctrines involving the "union with Christ" thought can be shown to be inter-related in Calvin's theology, and if the thought can be proven to function at the centre of his theology, which had been located at the centre of the Reformation.

7.1. The "Union with Christ" Thought and the Central Thought of Calvin's Theology

So far, ascertaining whether there is a 'central doctrine' or 'central theme' in Calvin's work which influences his entire theology, is still under scrutiny. The issue arises from acknowledgement of the diversity of themes of Calvin's theology, rather than simply assuming that there is some central 'thought' or 'principle' in his theology. Some theologians doubt that such a thought of principle exists in his oeuvre.

Nevertheless, I have proposed several times that Calvin developed his theology systematically from both the aspects of its structure and content, when he wrote the *Institutes*, which is the condensed version of his theology.¹ If seen from this viewpoint, it is logical that a central thought has been identified and plays an important role to ensure that the various theological themes and doctrines are not dealt with randomly in Calvin's theology. This presumes the presence of a core thought, acting as a guideline according to which Calvin's theology has been composed systematically.

In particular, as mentioned in Chapter Six, the very close inter-relationship between 'the theological twofold structure as God and ourselves' and the "union with Christ" thought points toward the likely existence of a central thought or theological principle in Calvin's theology. Yet we cannot find any indications that any *doctrine* functions as a central *doctrine* in Calvin's theology. This applies equally to the doctrine of "union with Christ." The reason is simple; Calvin's theology includes a diversity of doctrines, and the various doctrines have been emphasized in his theology, each having an individual peculiarity.

¹ Regarding the fact that Calvin's theology is systematic, and that Calvin himself was also a systematic and logical thinker, see 'The Comprehensiveness of the Content of the "Union with Christ" Thought' of Chapter Four.

Without collapsing the diversity of doctrines in Calvin's theology, and at the same time, to verify the fact that "union with Christ" plays a crucial role in the relationship with the various doctrines, we need a different theological approach. If we have approached Calvin's theology with a view of locating a 'central doctrine' or 'central theme' until now, then from now onwards we should search for a more comprehensive and methodological approach formula as a central 'thought' or a 'theological principle.' If this is so, from the doctrinal viewpoint, what should take precedence to verify the fact that "union with Christ" is a central thought of Calvin's theology?

7.1.1. The Issue of 'Central Doctrine' or 'Central Thought' in Calvin's Theology

In Calvin's theology, the various theological themes and doctrines have been dealt with extensively, as in his *Institutes*. Some Calvinistic theologians' analyses state that the *Institutes* has a twofold theological structure of "the knowledge of God and the knowledge of ourselves," or it has followed the order of the Apostles' Creed or the structural form of Romans. All of these statements acknowledge, however, that Calvin's theology is written systematically. I agree with the argument that there is a theological system in the *Institutes*, although this statement should not be interpreted in an abstract, speculative way, or as a closed system.

Why then has the rejection of the existence of some 'central thought' affecting Calvin's entire theology, persisted ceaselessly until the present?² The reason lies in the diversity of doctrines and of theological themes that are to be found in Calvin's theology. These themes have been emphasized in his theology as each having a peculiarity.

² Regarding the references which deal with the statements that deny the existence of a 'central doctrine' in Calvin's theology, see the following books and treatises: Richard C. Gamble, "Calvin as Theologian and Exegete: Is There Anything New?" 52-3; Charles Partee, "Calvin's Central Dogma Again," 75-8; I. John Hesselink, "Calvin's Theology," 78; J. Todd Billings, *Calvin, Participation, and the Gift*, 19; Charles Partee, *The Theology of John Calvin*, 42; William B. Evans, *Imputation and Impartation*, 8; Michael S. Horton, "Calvin's Theology of Union with Christ and the Double Grace: Modern Reception and Contemporary Possibilities," in *Calvin's Theology and Its Reception: Disputes, Developments, and New Possibilities*, ed. J. Todd Billings and I. John Hesselink (Louisville, Kentucky: John Knox Press, 2012), 80; John H. Leith, "Calvin's Theological Method and the Ambiguity in His Theology," 265; Wilhelm Niesel, *The Theology of Calvin*, 19; Alfred Göhler, *Calvins Lehre von der Heiligung* (München: Kaiser, 1934), 81; Herman J. Selderhuis, *Calvin's Theology of the Psalms*, 14-38; Cornelis P. Venema, *Accepted and Renewed in Christ*, 7; Brian G. Armstrong, "The Nature and Structure of Calvin's Thought According to the *Institutes*: Another Look," 55-61. Additionally, for the references to refusals of a 'central thought' or 'theological principle' in Calvin's theology, see the following: Wilhelm Niesel, *Die Theologie Calvins* (München, Germany: Chr. Kaiser Verlag München, 1957), 9-22; François Wendel, *Calvin*, 357-60; Charles Partee, "Calvin's Central Dogma Again," 76-8; T. A. Noble, "Our Knowledge of God according to John Calvin," in *The Organizational Structure of Calvin's Theology: Volume 7*, ed. Richard C. Gamble (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc, 1992), 320; Benjamin Charles Milner, Jr., *Calvin's Doctrine of the Church* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1970), 2; Charles Partee, *The Theology of John Calvin*, 42.

From this point of view, the issues are about interpreting Calvin's entire theology by virtue of a particular doctrine. Wendel's statement clearly shows this fact:

If we want to speak of a 'system' of Calvin, we must do so with certain reservations, owing to the plurality of themes that imposed themselves simultaneously upon its author's thinking. *It is because they have failed to realize this, that the majority of historians have tried to reconstruct the Calvinist dogmatic from the standpoint of one central idea supposed to dominate it as a whole.* For a long while, as we know, predestination was held to be that idea. Some proposed to discard this in favour of the Glory of God; others exchanged it for the sovereignty of God, or even for eschatology... If one wanted at all costs to find such a central idea, one would be more likely to find it expressed in this sentence, written one day by Luther: '*Omnia quidem habemus a Deo, sed non nisi per Christum.*' But every authentically Christian theology could claim this for itself. *It would be better, we think, to confess that Calvin's is not a closed system elaborated around a central idea, but that it draws together, one after another, a whole series of Biblical ideas, some of which can only with difficulty be logically reconciled*³ (own emphasis).

In a practical manner, due to such "plurality of themes that impose themselves simultaneously," Wendel's statement that the theological analyses indicating a central idea in Calvin's theology, have failed, is not entirely wrong. I do concede to some of his arguments, such as that Calvin's theology "is not a closed system elaborated around a central idea."

Nevertheless, I cannot agree completely with his total rejection of a central idea or theological principle in Calvin's theology. If seen from the viewpoint of "union with Christ," Wendel's statement can be qualified, or at least so this dissertation argues on the following grounds:

Firstly, the "union with Christ" thought has a close inter-relationship with 'the plurality of themes that imposed themselves simultaneously in Calvin's theology.' Wendel seems to deny the possibility of a central thought or theological principle, because of the theological diversity in Calvin's theology. Other theologians' statements, which too have denied the existence of such a central thought are not entirely different from that of Wendel. As I have explained in Chapter Four of this dissertation, however, the "union with Christ" thought occurs extensively in Calvin's theology as having a close inter-relationship with the various doctrines or theological themes. This point is just one of the important features that confirms that the "union with Christ" thought acts as a central thought of Calvin's theology.

³ François Wendel, *Calvin: The Origins and Development of His Religious Thought* (London: Collins, 1963), 357-8.

Secondly, contrary to Wendel's argument, the doctrines which are discussed in Calvin's theology can be reconstructed from the viewpoint of "union with Christ" thought. In practice, almost all theological attempts have set out from the aspect of a '*central doctrine*,' and not a '*central thought*.' This is the reason that we should also approach "union with Christ" from the viewpoint of a 'thought' or a 'central thought,'⁴ and not only as a 'doctrine' or a 'central doctrine.'⁵

Thirdly, the systematic analytical works on some central idea (or thought) or various doctrines in Calvin's theology (or the whole of the *Institutes*) have seldom been worked out in a comprehensive and detailed manner. Nevertheless, Wendel insists that 'the majority of theologians have tried to reconstruct the Calvinist dogmatic from the standpoint of one central idea until the present time.' But in fact, in terms of the scope, frequency, structure, content, and theological meanings, there are almost no examples that have analyzed the various theological themes in the *Institutes* comprehensively and systematically by the research methodology of a central thought. However, "union with Christ" is dealt with comprehensively in Calvin's theology as having a close inter-relationship with the various

⁴ Regarding the references which deal with the various statements that there is a 'central doctrine' in Calvin's theology, see the following: Wilhelm Niesel, *The Theology of Calvin*, trans. Harold Knight (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1980), 9-21; Richard C. Gamble, "Calvin as Theologian and Exegete: Is There Anything New?" in *The Organizational Structure of Calvin's Theology: Volume 7*, ed. Richard C. Gamble (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc, 1992), 44-60; I. John Hesselink, "Calvin's Theology," in *John Calvin*, ed. Donald K. McKim (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 78-81; J. Todd Billings, *Calvin, Participation, and the Gift: The Activity of Believers in Union with Christ* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 19; Charles Partee, "Calvin's Central Dogma Again," in *The Organizational Structure of Calvin's Theology: Volume 7*, ed. Richard C. Gamble (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc, 1992), 75-8; William B. Evans, *Imputation and Impartation: Union with Christ in American Reformed Theology* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock, 2008), 8; Herman J. Selderhuis, *Calvin's Theology of the Psalms* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2007), 14-38; Cornelis P. Venema, *Accepted and Renewed in Christ: The Twofold Grace of God and the Interpretation of Calvin's Theology* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007), 7.

⁵ Regarding the references which deal with the statement that there is a 'central thought' or 'theological principle' in Calvin's theology rather than a 'central doctrine,' see the following books and treatises: Hermann Bauke, *Die Probleme der Theologie Calvins* (Leipzig: Verlag der J. C. Hinrichs'schen Buchhandlung, 1922); Edward A. Dowey, Jr., *The Knowledge of God in Calvin's Theology* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1952); T. H. L. Parker, *The Doctrine of the knowledge of God: A Study in the Theology of John Calvin* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1952); Louis Berkhof, *Introduction to Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1979), 80; John H. Leith, "Calvin's Theological Method and the Ambiguity in His Theology," in *The Organizational Structure of Calvin's Theology: Volume 7*, ed. Richard C. Gamble (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc, 1992), 264-75; Paul Helm, *Calvin: A Guide for the Perplexed* (London: T&T Clark, 2008), 71; Charles Partee, *The Theology of John Calvin* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2008), xv; idem, "Calvin's Central Dogma Again," 82; I. John Hesselink, "Ford Lewis Battles: The Catholic Calvinian," by Ford Lewis Battles, *Interpreting John Calvin*, ed. Robert Benedetto (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 1996), 29-32; Ronald S. Wallace, "A Christian Theologian: Calvin's Approach to Theology, Revelation in the Old and New Testaments," in *The Organizational Structure of Calvin's Theology: Volume 7*, ed. Richard C. Gamble (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc, 1992), 121-5; Brian G. Armstrong, "The Nature and Structure of Calvin's Thought According to the *Institutes*: Another Look," in *John Calvin's Institutes His opus magnum* (Potchefstroom University, 1986), 55-61; Richard C. Gamble, "Calvin as Theologian and Exegete: Is There Anything New?" 44-60.

theological themes.

In the same manner, the “union with Christ” thought recurs throughout the *Institutes* as having a close inter-connection with various doctrines or theological themes; it serves as a core thought in this relationship and deserves to be re-evaluated in terms of this inter-relationship with the structure, content, scope, frequency, form, and the various doctrines of the *Institutes*.

As I have stated in the introduction to this dissertation, my qualification of Charles Partee’s statement that the *doctrine* of union with Christ is a ‘central doctrine’ or ‘central theme’ of Calvin’s theology still holds true, because there is no sign that the *doctrine* of union with Christ features as a ‘central doctrine’ in Calvin’s theology. Instead, in the *Institutes*, the role of union with Christ as a *doctrine* has functioned intensively mostly in soteriology (Book III) and the doctrine of Sacrament (Book IV). On the contrary, the “union with Christ” *thought* or ‘union with the Triune God’ *thought* has been dealt with comprehensively in all the books of the *Institutes* as having an inter-relationship with the various theological themes or doctrines.

The dictionary definition of ‘doctrine’ and ‘thought’ are as follows: doctrine is “a set of beliefs or principles held and taught by a Church, political party, or other group.” ‘Thought,’ however, is “the formation of opinions, especially as a philosophy or system of ideas, or the opinions so formed.”⁶ Of course, if seen only from the viewpoint of meaning, the doctrine of union with Christ and the “union with Christ” thought do not differ much. Nevertheless, if seen from the viewpoint of the scope of the ‘doctrinal role’ or a ‘role of thought,’ they are definitely distinguishable.

From this point of view, it is necessary to understand the distinction between “union with Christ” as ‘doctrine’ and as ‘thought.’ In Calvin’s theology, the *doctrine* of “union with Christ” has plays mainly a doctrinal role in soteriology and the doctrine of Sacrament. By contrast, the “union with Christ” *thought* or ‘union with the Triune God’ *thought* is treated comprehensively as a ‘central thought’ or a ‘theological principle’ in his entire theology, through the various metaphorical expressions.

In addition, while the union *doctrine* features when it explains directly the doctrine itself, the union *thought* has occurs also when other doctrines or theological themes are explained. Therefore, it is right that we approach the union from the viewpoint of a ‘central

⁶ Catherine Soanes and Angus Stevenson, *Concise Oxford English Dictionary, Eleventh Edition, Revised* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 421, 1500.

thought,’ and not a ‘central doctrine,’ in order to deal with “union with Christ” as a comprehensive ‘theological principle’ or ‘theological methodology’ that informs the structure, content, scope, form, various theological themes, and various doctrines of Calvin’s theology.

This thought has been shown to have a close inter-relationship with ‘the plurality of themes that impose themselves simultaneously in Calvin’s theology.’ Its interconnection extends to the structure, content, scope, and form of the *Institutes*, which is the condensed version of Calvin’s theology. What theological meaning do these results present to us? It means that the “union with Christ” thought or ‘union with the Triune God’ thought functions as a ‘central thought’ exerting a crucial influence on Calvin’s theology.

7.1.2. The Importance of the “Union with Christ” Thought in Calvin’s Theology

The issue of the “union with Christ” thought or ‘union with the Triune God’ thought in Calvin’s theology has been debated ceaselessly,⁷ but theologians conducting relevant research have failed to recognize sufficiently its importance. Calvin himself mentions the importance of the thought several times and in diverse ways in his theology. With reference to its importance, he uses the direct words of the thought sometimes and at other times refers to it through indirect metaphorical expressions.

Regarding the importance of the “union with Christ” thought, what theological meaning do these common emphases of Calvin and the theologians who researched his theology grant us? More specifically, what inter-relationship exists among the emphases on the importance of the “union with Christ” thought, the central thought of Calvin’s theology, and the doctrinal scope of the thought? In the light of such questions these emphases may be divided into the following:

7.1.2.1. The Importance of “Union with Christ” in Soteriology

Firstly, the emphasis on the importance of “union with Christ” in soteriology will be examined. As I have mentioned, in Reformed Theology Calvin’s “union with Christ” has been dealt with in the past mainly as a doctrine subordinated to soteriology and the doctrine of Sacrament. I wish to argue that this theological tendency has created an epistemological blind spot regarding the importance of the “union with Christ” thought in Reformed

⁷ Regarding the statements that are related to the importance of the “union with Christ” thought, see ‘Background to the Research’ in Chapter One (Introduction) of this dissertation.

Theology. However, more recently concessions that “union with Christ” occupies a central position in Calvin’s theology, in soteriology, have been presented. Garcia gives an example of this fact:

At the same time, however, as the case studies below will demonstrate, the doctrine of union with Christ does appear to stand as *a singularly determinative idea* in Calvin’s soteriology. By “singularly determinative” I intend to emphasize the controlling significance for Calvin of the truth that the Holy Spirit unites believers savingly to Christ by faith⁸ (own emphasis).

These recent emphases on the importance of “union with Christ” in Calvin’s soteriology are a remarkable theological development, since as they point out, Calvin himself also emphasizes the importance of “union with Christ” as having a relationship with soteriology. The following statement, from the opening of the first door of Book III (“The Way in Which We Receive the Grace of Christ: What Benefits Come to Us from It, and What Effects Follow?”) of his *Institutes*, refers:

First, we must understand that as long as Christ remains outside of us, and we are separated from him, all that he has suffered and done for the salvation of the human race remains useless and of no value for us. Therefore, to share with us what he has received from the Father, he had to become ours and to dwell within us... To sum up, the Holy Spirit is the bond by which Christ effectually unites us to himself.⁹ We see that our whole salvation and all its parts are comprehended in Christ (Acts 4:12). We should therefore take care not to derive the least portion of it from anywhere else¹⁰ (own emphasis).

In the same manner, the “union with Christ” thought occupies a central position in Calvin’s soteriology. Regarding the recent insistences related to the importance of “union with Christ” in Calvin’s soteriology, see the following: Mark A. Garcia, *Life in Christ: Union with Christ and Twofold Grace in Calvin’s Theology* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock, 2008), 19 (“*The doctrine of union with Christ does appear to stand as a singularly determinative idea in Calvin’s soteriology.*”); Michael S. Horton, “Calvin’s Theology of Union with Christ and the Double Grace,” 72 (“*It is undeniable that ‘mystical union’ is an important motif that plays a formative role in his explication of the application of redemption as well as the nature*

⁸ Mark A. Garcia, *Life in Christ: Union with Christ and Twofold Grace in Calvin’s Theology* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock, 2008), 18.

⁹ *Institutes*, 3.1.1.

¹⁰ *Institutes*, 2.16.19.

of the church and the sacraments.”); Dennis E. Tamburello, *Union with Christ: John Calvin and the Mysticism of St. Bernard* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1994), 84-85; Kevin Dixon Kennedy, *Union with Christ and the Extent of the Atonement in Calvin* (New York: Peter Lang, 2002); William B. Evans, *Imputation and Impartation*.

For the other insurances that are related to the importance of “union with Christ” in soteriology, see the following books: J. Todd Billings, *Union with Christ: Reframing Theology and Ministry for the Church* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2011), 1 (“*Union with Christ is a central New Testament description of Christian identity, the life of salvation in Christ.*”); Robert Letham, *Union with Christ: In Scripture, History, and Theology* (Phillipsburg, New Jersey: P&R Publishing, 2011), 1 (“*Union with Christ is right at the centre of the Christian doctrine of salvation.*”); Richard B. Gaffin, Jr., *The Centrality of the Resurrection: A Study in Paul’s Soteriology* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1978), 51 (“*There is no element in the whole of Paul’s soteriology more basic than this existential union with Christ.*”); A. Blake White, *Union with Christ: Last Adam and Seed of Abraham* (Frederick, Maryland: New Covenant Media, 2012), 7 (“*Union with Christ is central to the doctrine of salvation.*”); Bruce Demarest, *The Cross and Salvation: The Doctrine of Salvation* (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway Books, 2006), 313-44.

Nevertheless, it is not restricted only to soteriology, as Garcia postulated, for the thought occurs extensively as a core thought in Calvin’s theology while maintaining a close inter-relationship with the various doctrines or theological themes.

From this point of view, we should jettison the theological tendency to restrict the importance of “union with Christ” thought only to soteriology, otherwise, the thought it will remain an ordinary doctrine subordinated to soteriology. On the contrary, if we deal with “union with Christ” as a theological ‘principle,’ ‘thought,’ or ‘methodology’ with a close inter-relationship to various doctrines, theological themes and numerous biblical texts as Calvin did, the thought will also be valuable in today’s church, as in the Reformation period.

7.1.2.2. The Importance of “Union with Christ” and the Good News of the Gospel

Secondly, it emphasizes the importance of “union with Christ” as the ‘purpose’ or the ‘core element’ of the Gospel. For the close inter-connectedness between the gospel and “union with Christ,” also about the importance of “union with Christ” as a ‘core element’ of the gospel, see J. Todd Billings’ statement:

First and foremost, *the good news of the gospel is the gift of actually being united to Jesus Christ* — a gift received from God in a way that activates us to live into this new life, coming to us as part of God’s new creation... Thus, the gospel is not simply forgiveness of our sins or a “get into heaven free” card. Irreducibly, it is participation in Christ’s righteousness through receiving forgiveness *and* new life by the Spirit. *This new life in union with Christ displays itself* in a life of justice, *a life formed by the God-focused, Christ-centered gospel*.¹¹

Calvin reveals the “union with Christ” thought or ‘union with the Triune God’ thought as being inter-related with some theological themes, one of which is the way in which it is linked to the good news of the Gospel. Thus the core element of the Gospel is included in the “union with Christ” thought, and in the opposite direction the elements of “union with Christ” are located at the centre of the Gospel.

In the same manner, there have been numerous theological arguments in Reformed Theology that “union with Christ” is connected very closely to the Gospel.¹² Billings presents an example, writing: “Union with Christ is theological shorthand for the gospel itself,”¹³ and Ryken has indicated the importance of “union with Christ” for the Gospel by Calvin’s comment on Pauline theology, which Wallace quotes, as follows:

Indeed, *union with Christ is the heart of the gospel*, for when the apostle Paul “defines the Gospel, and the use of it, he says that we are called to be partakers of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to be made one with Him, and to dwell in Him, and He in us; and that we be joined together in an inseparable bond”¹⁴ (own emphasis).

Long before these theological statements were presented, Calvin had also already emphasized its importance in dealing with the Gospel together with the “union with Christ”

¹¹ J. Todd Billings, *Union with Christ: Reframing Theology and Ministry for the Church* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2011), 31, 108.

¹² Dennis E. Tamburello, *Union with Christ: John Calvin and the Mysticism of St. Bernard* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1994), 89, 144; H. R. Mackintosh, *Some Aspects of Christian Belief* (New York: Hodder & Stoughton, 1923), 118-20; Mark A. Garcia, *Life in Christ*, 16; Robert Letham, *Union with Christ: In Scripture, History, and Theology* (Phillipsburg, New Jersey: P&R Publishing, 2011), 107-13; Bruce Demarest, *The Cross and Salvation: The Doctrine of Salvation* (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway Books, 2006), 336; Lane G. Tipton, “Union with Christ and Justification,” *Justified in Christ: God’s Plan for Us in Justification*, ed. K. Scott Oliphint (Fearn, Ross-Shire, UK: Mentor, 2007), 34; J. Todd Billings, “Union with Christ and the Double Grace: Calvin’s Theology and Its Early Reception,” *Calvin’s Theology and Its Reception: Disputes, Developments, and New Possibilities*, ed. J. Todd Billings and I. John Hesselink (Louisville, Kentucky: John Knox Press, 2012), 49; Graham A. Cole, *He Who Gives Life* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2007), 240.

¹³ J. Todd Billings, *Union with Christ*, 1.

¹⁴ Philip Graham Ryken, “The Believer’s Union with Christ,” in *John Calvin: A Heart for Devotion Doctrine & Doxology*, ed. Burk Parsons (Lake Mary, FL: Reformation Trust Publishing, 2008), 191. See also the following: *Institutes*, 3.11.10; *Serm.* on 2 Ti. 2:19; *Serm.* on Tit. 1:7-9.

thought. In particular, the following statement, which is related to Calvin's theology of the importance of "union with Christ" as a 'core element' of the Gospel, clearly shows this fact. Beeke admits the importance of union with Christ, which is connected to the Gospel by quoting the *Institutes* (3.2.24), as follows:

Nonetheless, Calvin states, 'Not only does he cleave to us by an indivisible bond of fellowship, but with a wonderful communion, day by day, he grows more and more into one body with us, until he becomes completely one with us.' *This union is one of the gospel's greatest mysteries*¹⁵ (own emphasis).

On the other hand, Wallace finds that "Calvin notes that in defining the means by which we are saved it is better to use the phrase *in Christ* rather than *by Christ*." He also indicates the reason for this, asserting that "the former phrase has more expressiveness and force and denotes the union with Christ which is such a necessary part of the Gospel."¹⁶ He, therefore, emphasizes the importance of "union with Christ" in Calvin's theology, as follows: "*For Calvin, this union with Christ is one of the most important doctrines for anyone to grasp who would understand the Christian faith and the Christian life and the Christian ordinances.*"¹⁷

Horton underlines the importance of the connection between "union with Christ" and the Gospel, by quoting the Commentary of Calvin on John, as follows:

Thus, commenting on John 17, Calvin explains, "*Having been ingrafted into the body of Christ*, we are made partakers of the Divine adoption, and heirs of heaven." "*This is the purpose of the gospel*," he says, "that Christ should become ours, and that we should be ingrafted into his body"¹⁸ (own emphasis).

There are also many other theological statements about the importance of "union with Christ" as a 'core element' of the Gospel or the 'purpose' of the Gospel.¹⁹ This result

¹⁵ Joel R. Beeke, "Calvin on Piety," in *John Calvin*, ed. Donald K. McKim (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 128.

¹⁶ Ronald S. Wallace, *Calvin's Doctrine of the Christian Life* (Tyler, TX: Geneva Divinity School Press, 1982), 17-8.

¹⁷ Ronald S. Wallace, *Calvin's Doctrine of the Word and Sacrament* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1953), 143

¹⁸ Michael S. Horton, *Covenant and Salvation: Union with Christ* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2007), 140.

¹⁹ Regarding the close inter-connectedness between the Gospel and "union with Christ" thought in Calvin's theology, see the following books and treatises: Charles Partee, *The Theology of John Calvin*, 195 ("We come to enjoy Christ and all his benefits because of 'the secret work of the Spirit' who is the bond by

clearly verifies that in his theology, Calvin had seen the “union with Christ” thought as having a close inter-relationship with not only the other theological themes, but also with the Gospel. This fact emerges in the following statements by Calvin himself:

For this is the design of the gospel, that Christ may become ours, and that we may be ingrafted into his body. Now when the Father gives him to us in possession, he also communicates himself to us in him; and hence arises a participation in every benefit²⁰ (own emphasis).

And, doubtless, the words of the Apostle are intended to shew, that we ought not only reverently to obey the gospel, lest we should affront God; but that we ought to love it, because it brings to us eternal life. *We hence also learn what is especially to be sought in the gospel, even the free gift of salvation...* But the Apostle, *that he might keep us altogether in Christ*, again repeats that life is found in him; as though he had said, that no other way of obtaining life has been appointed for us by God the Father. And the Apostle, indeed, briefly includes here three things: that we are all given up to death until God in his gratuitous favour restores us to life; for he plainly declares that life is a gift from God: and hence also it follows that we are destitute of it, and that it cannot be acquired by merits; secondly, he teaches us that *this life is conferred on us by the gospel*, because there the goodness and the paternal love of God is made known to us; *lastly, he says that we cannot otherwise become partakers of this life than by believing in Christ*²¹ (own emphasis).

In the same manner, the “union with Christ” thought is closely inter-connected to the Gospel. As a bible-centric thinker Calvin, has placed heavy emphasis on the close inter-connection to the Gospel by quoting the biblical texts. His theology has clearly shown that the whole of the Gospel, that is, its beginning and the end, its effect and its purpose, and its fruit are never disunited from the “union with Christ” thought.

Recognizing this fact also presents us an important theological insight. For what is even more necessary in our day is the restoration of this theological ‘Gospel,’ including the more in-depth emphasis on the “union with Christ” thought.

which Christ effectually unites us to himself (*Institutes*, 3.1.1.). The purpose of human life is to be united to God (*Comm.* on Hab. 2:4). *The end of the gospel is union with God.* There can be no communion without love, and progress in faith requires *cleaving to God* (*Comm.* 1 Jn. 2:5).”; A. Blake White, *Union with Christ*, 7-8 (“We receive no blessing of the gospel outside of our union with Christ. We have been blessed with *every spiritual blessing* in Christ (Eph. 1:3). All of God’s goodness is mediated to us in union with the Messiah, our representative. *Since all the blessings of salvation are found in Christ, union with Christ is the central blessing of the gospel.*”); Michael S. Horton, “Calvin’s Theology of Union with Christ and the Double Grace,” 89.

²⁰ *Comm.* on 1 Co. 1:9. About Calvin’s the other statements which are connected with the “union with Christ” and the gospel, see the following references: *Comm.* on Jn. 8:19; *Comm.* on 1 Jn. 2:5; *Comm.* on 1 Jn. 5:11; *Institutes*, 3.1.1; 3.1.4; 3.3.1; 3.6.4; 4.1.1.

²¹ *Comm.* on 1 Jn. 5:11.

7.1.2.3. The Importance of the “Union with Christ” as a Central Doctrine of Calvin’s Theology

Lastly, there is also the emphasis on the importance of “union with Christ” as a ‘central doctrine’ of Calvin’s theology. Research that sought some theological principle, form, and theme in Calvin’s theology departed from a comprehensive viewpoint and dates from the 20th century onward.²² From the comprehensive viewpoint, the theological proposals that locate “union with Christ” in an important position in Calvin’s theology dates from the 1930’s onward.²³

Of course, the emphases on “union with Christ” were presented sporadically before that period. However, if seen from the more comprehensive viewpoint, the emphases on “union with Christ” in Calvin’s theology certainly began from after the middle 1930’s.²⁴ Since then there has been comprehensive and systematic research, even though sporadic, delivering theological claims that the contents of Calvin’s theology are connected to “union with Christ.”²⁵

Even though Wendel refutes the claim that there is a “central dogma” in Calvin’s theology, he nevertheless emphasizes the importance of union with Christ in Calvin’s theology, as follows: “The imprint of his (Calvin’s) personality can best be seen in the practical consequences that *he was concerned to draw from his notion of union with the Christ.*”²⁶ Torrance also emphasizes the importance of “union with Christ” in Calvin’s theology, as follows: “*All Calvin’s teaching and preaching have to do with salvation through union with Christ in his death and resurrection.*”²⁷

According to my analysis, the first detailed and systematic theological statement to propose that the doctrine of “union with Christ” acts as a central doctrine in Calvin’s

²² Cf. For this part, see footnote no. 38 of Chapter One (Introduction) of this dissertation.

²³ See Wilhelm Kolffhaus, *Christusgemeinschaft bei Johannes Calvin* (Neukirchen: Kr. Moers; Buchlandlungen des Erziehungsvereins, 1939).

²⁴ See Emil Brunner, *Vom Werk des heiligen Geistes* (Tübingen, 1935), 38. Brunner states that the doctrine of “union with Christ” is the “center of all Calvinistic thinking.” The doctrine of “union with Christ,” in fact, was frequently treated in Calvinism.

²⁵ François Wendel, *Calvin, Sources et évolution de sa pensée religieuse* (Presse Universitaires De France, 1950); Wilhelm Niesel, *Die Theologie Calvins* (München, Germany: Chr. Kaiser Verlag München, 1957), 246-8; Ronald S. Wallace, *Calvin’s Doctrine of the Word and Sacrament*; Paul Van Buren, *Christ in Our Place: The Substitutionary Character of Calvin’s Doctrine of Reconciliation* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1957).

²⁶ François Wendel, *Calvin*, 360.

²⁷ T. F. Torrance, *Conflict and Agreement in the Church* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1959), 91.

theology was made by Charles Partee.²⁸ Even though Partee insists: “There is no evidence that Calvin thought the search for a central dogma or common theme or organizing principle was an essential feature of that task,” he emphasizes that “union with Christ” has played a crucial role as a central doctrine in Calvin’s theology. Besides, emphases on the importance of the doctrine of “union with Christ” in Calvin’s theology, or statements about the importance of “union with Christ” as a central doctrine in Calvin’s theology have been presented quite frequently.²⁹

For example, Paul Helm expounds on the importance of “union with Christ” in Calvin’s theology in detail, as follows:

*Calvin’s basic thought, as he moves from considering the work of Christ to how that work is applied to us and affects us, is that by the unspeakable mercy of God we are united to Christ, and from that one ‘mystical’ union two distinct but inseparable benefits flow*³⁰ (own emphasis).

In the same manner, the theological statements claiming that “union with Christ,” features significantly in Calvin’s theology, or that it plays a role as a central doctrine, have

²⁸ Charles Partee, “Calvin’s Central Dogma Again,” *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, vol. XVIII, no. 2 (Summer 1987): 191-99.

²⁹ Regarding the theological statements that are connected to the importance of “union with Christ” or the importance of “union with Christ” in Calvin’s theology, see the following: I. John Hesselink, *Calvin’s First Catechism: A Commentary* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997), 104, 185-6, 233; J. Todd Billings, *Calvin, Participation, and the Gift*, 18-9, 69, 87, 103-4, 187, 195; Charles Partee, “Calvin’s Central Dogma Again,” 80-3; Guenther H. Haas, “Calvin’s Ethics,” in *John Calvin*, ed. Donald K. McKim (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 94; Joel R. Beeke, “Calvin on Piety,” *John Calvin*, ed. Donald K. McKim (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 127-9; Wilhelm Niesel, *Reformed Symbolics: A Comparison of Catholicism, Orthodoxy, and Protestantism*, trans. David Lewis (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1962), 181; Lewis B. Smedes, “The Incarnation: Trends in Modern Anglican Thought” (The Free University of Amsterdam, 1953), 164; J. Todd Billings, *Union with Christ*, 1-2, 64-5, 148; Charles Partee, *The Theology of John Calvin*, xv-xvi, 16, 27, 30, 40, 41-2, 166-7, 174-6, 195, 202, 206, 298, 320, 327; Mark A. Garcia, *Life in Christ*, 2-3, 15-8, 34-5; Augustus Hopkins Strong, *Union with Christ: A Chapter of Systematic Theology* (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1913), 17; William A. Mueller, “The Mystical Union,” in *Basic Christian Doctrines: Contemporary Evangelical Thought*, ed. Carl F. H. Henry (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1975), 211-2; John Murray, “Sanctification (The Law),” in *Basic Christian Doctrines: Contemporary Evangelical Thought*, ed. Carl F. H. Henry (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1975), 228; H. R. Mackintosh, *The Doctrine of the Person of Jesus Christ* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1913), 336-8; Paul Helm, *Calvin*, 71; Charles Partee, *Calvin and Classical Philosophy* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1977), 67, 88; Michael S. Horton, *Covenant and Salvation*, 140, 152; William B. Evans, *Imputation and Impartation*, 1, 8; A. Blake White, *Union with Christ*, 11-4; Kevin Dixon Kennedy, *Union with Christ and the Extent of the Atonement in Calvin*, 11, 14; Julie Canlis, *Calvin’s Ladder: A Spiritual Theology of Ascent and Ascension* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2010), 5-6; Karl Barth, *CD IV/3*, 2, 550-51; Stephen N. Williams, “Living in Union with Christ according to John Calvin (1509-1564),” in *Living in Union with Christ in Today’s World: The Witness of John Calvin and Ignatius Loyola*, ed. Brendan McConvery (Dublin, Ireland: Veritas Publications, 2011), 17, 30; Michael S. Horton, “Calvin’s Theology of Union with Christ and the Double Grace,” 72, 76-7, 94; Dawn Devries, “Calvin’s Preaching,” in *John Calvin*, ed. Donald K. McKim (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 120; Sinclair B. Ferguson, *The Christian Life: A Doctrinal Introduction* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1981), 92.

³⁰ Paul Helm, *Calvin*, 71.

been presented ceaselessly. Although such statements contribute toward revealing the importance of “union with Christ,” none of those theologians have researched or analysed Calvin’s theology (the whole *Institutes*, or the other theological works) comprehensively, systematically, entirely, and in detail from this viewpoint.

There has thus been a paucity of work dealing with the inter-relationship of the “union with Christ” thought’s scope, position, content, form, frequency, and other theological aspects in Calvin’s theology (especially in the *Institutes*). It would be an obvious limitation to verify the theological thought, principle, or methodology in Calvin’s theology only from a doctrinal viewpoint.³¹ Because of this theological limitation, proposals about the importance of “union with Christ” thought have failed to persuade widely, despite its important position in Calvin’s entire theology, and also in the entire New Testament.³²

³¹ Regarding the theological basis that cannot verify a theological ‘thought’ or ‘principle’ which exists in Calvin’s theology only from the doctrinal viewpoint, see also the part of Chapter Six of this dissertation titled ‘*The Institutes*’ Structure from the viewpoint of “Union with Christ” Thought.’

³² Regarding the theological statements about the importance of “union with Christ” in the New Testament, see the following books and treatises: Constantine R. Campbell, *Paul and Union with Christ: An Exegetical and Theological Study* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2012); Richard N. Longenecker, *Galatians: Word Biblical Commentary*, Vol. 41 (Dallas: Word Books, 1990), 159; James S. Stewart, *A Man in Christ: The Vital Elements of St. Paul’s Religion* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1962), 147; Anthony A. Hoekema, *Saved by Grace* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1989), 65-6; J. Todd Billings, *Union with Christ*, 1, 7-8, 65; idem, *Calvin, Participation, and the Gift*, 18, 195; Mark A. Garcia, *Life in Christ*, 39; Robert Letham, *Union with Christ*, 3, 103; H. R. Mackintosh, *Some Aspects of Christian Belief*, 116; H. R. Mackintosh, *The Doctrine of the Person of Jesus Christ*, 56; John Murray, *Redemption: Accomplished and Applied* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1980), 161; William A. Mueller, “The Mystical Union,” 208; A. J. M. Wedderburn, *Baptism and Resurrection: Studies in Pauline Theology against Its Graeco-Roman Background* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1987), 346; Andreas J. Köstenberger, *A Theology of John’s Gospel and Letters: Biblical Theology of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2009), 563; Henry W. Holloman, “Sanctification,” in *Understanding Christian Theology*, ed. Charles R. Swindoll and Roy B. Zuck (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2003), 968-9; A. Blake White, *Union with Christ*, 2-4; Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 2, ed. John F. Walvoord (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1988), 135-48; Neil T. Anderson and Robert L. Saucy, *The Common Made Holy: Being Conformed to the image of God* (Eugene, Oregon: Harvest House Publishers, 1997), 177-9; Lambert M. Surhone, Mariam T. Tennoe, and Susan F. Henssonow, *Union with Christ* (U.S.A: Betascript Publishing, 2011), 1; Bruce Demarest, *The Cross and Salvation*, 313.

Regarding the theological statements about the importance of “union with Christ” in the Pauline theology, see the following books and treatises: N. T. Wright, *What Saint Paul Really Said* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1997), 11-24; Richard N. Longenecker, *Galatians*, 159; Francis Watson, *Paul and the Hermeneutics of Faith* (London: T & T Clark International, 2004), 35; H. R. Mackintosh, *Some Aspects of Christian Belief*, 102-7; William A. Mueller, “The Mystical Union,” 209; Paul Helm, *Calvin*, 54; Anthony A. Hoekema, *Saved by Grace*, 64-5; J. Todd Billings, “John Calvin: United to God through Christ,” in *Partakers of the Divine Nature: The History and Development of Deification in the Christian Traditions*, ed. Michael J. Christensen and Jeffery A. Wittung (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2007), 200-2; Geerhardus Vos, *The Pauline Eschatology* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1952), 44; A. J. M. Wedderburn, *Baptism and Resurrection*, 348-9; J. Todd Billings, *Union with Christ*, 65; idem, *Calvin, Participation, and the Gift: The Activity of Believers in Union with Christ* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 26, 65, 69, 103-4, 195; A. Blake White, *Union with Christ*, 9, 11, 14, 30; Julie Canlis, *Calvin’s Ladder*, 9-10; Robert Letham, *Union with Christ*, 4, 103; Henry W. Holloman, “Sanctification,” 962; Scot McKnight, *A Community Called Atonement* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2007), 59-60.

For the theological statements connected to the importance of “union with Christ” in the Johannine theology, see the following: H. R. Mackintosh, *Some Aspects of Christian Belief*, 105-7; idem, *The Doctrine of*

In particular, in Calvin's theology, "union with Christ" thought or 'union with the Triune God' thought is brought into relation with various other doctrines (or theological themes) and numerous biblical texts, as can be seen in the following statement by Calvin:

Therefore, that joining together of Head and members, that indwelling of Christ in our hearts—in short, that mystical union—are accorded by us the highest degree of importance, so that Christ, having been made ours, makes us sharers with him in the gifts with which he has been endowed. We do not, therefore, contemplate him outside ourselves from afar in order that his righteousness may be imputed to us but because we put on Christ and are engrafted into his body—in short, because he deigns to make us one with him³³ (own emphasis).

This emphasizes the importance of "union with Christ" thought and its Calvin's theology.

7.2. The Doctrinal Scope of the "Union with Christ" Thought in the *Institutes*

From here onward, I shall examine the doctrinal scope of the "union with Christ" thought in more detail, as it occurs in Calvin's theology. I will examine how often the various doctrines have been dealt with as having an inter-connection with the "union with Christ" thought in Calvin's theology (especially in the *Institutes*), and also measure its scope. Analysis of the inter-relationship between "union with Christ" thought and other doctrines, as well as its scope, presents us with important theological insights, because being able to verify that the thought has been dealt with extensively as having a close inter-relationship with the various doctrines in Calvin's theology, will give further evidence that this is a core 'thought' or 'principle' of his theology.

7.2.1. Various Doctrines Connected to the "Union with Christ" Thought

Recent theological statements that "union with Christ" has an inter-connectedness

the Person of Jesus Christ, 110-2, 336; Anthony A. Hoekema, *Saved by Grace*, 64; J. Todd Billings, "John Calvin: United to God through Christ," 200; idem, *Union with Christ*, 65; J. Todd Billings, *Calvin, Participation, and the Gift*, 18, 26, 65; Julie Canlis, *Calvin's Ladder*, 10; Robert Letham, *Union with Christ*, 4-5. For the theological statements that are connected to the importance of "union with Christ" in the Petrine theology, see the following books: Julie Canlis, *Calvin's Ladder*, 10-11; Robert Letham, *Union with Christ*, 5.

³³ *Institutes*, 3.11.10.

with the other doctrines (or theological themes), have frequently been presented.³⁴ The following statement by Julie Canlis is an example. She explains the inter-relationship between “union with Christ” and the other doctrines as ‘participation,’ which is another metaphorical expression of union with Christ, as follows:

Participation (union with Christ) takes us to the heart of Calvin’s vision of the Christian life, since it has an integrative power to bind together disparate doctrines such as creation, anthropology, soteriology, ecclesiology (sacraments), and eschatology. We have seen just how pivotal a consideration of this very conceptuality is in Calvin. Without an understanding of the nature of participation (union with Christ) and of its cohesive power, Calvin’s theology is left open to penal versions of the atonement, dialectical renditions of the divine-human relation, anthropologies of exclusive depravity, moralistic interpretations of the Christian life, and sacramental superficiality — to mention just a few deviants³⁵ (own emphasis).

I completely agree to Canlis’ pertinent statement that union with Christ (participation) “has an integrative power to bind together disparate doctrines” in Calvin’s theology. But no detailed analysis in this regard is provided. From the viewpoint of the inter-relationship between “union with Christ” and other doctrines, the doctrinal scope of the thought as presented by Canlis and other theologians invite further explication.

According to my analysis, including an examination of the *Institutes* from the viewpoint of focus on the “union with Christ” thought, the doctrines or theological themes related to the thought number more than 80. On detailed examination the themes that are linked with the “union with Christ” thought in the *Institutes*, beginning with the classification of the main doctrines, are the following:

7.2.1.1. The Doctrine of Revelation

First of all one can mention the doctrine of revelation in this regard,³⁶ in which the “union with Christ” thought has been dealt with as having an inter-connectedness with the following doctrines: the Scriptures or doctrine of the Word (“I take it for granted that there is

³⁴ J. Todd Billings, *Union with Christ*, 7; Mark A. Garcia, *Life in Christ*, 16-7; Charles Partee, *The Theology of John Calvin* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2008), 243.

³⁵ Julie Canlis, *Calvin’s Ladder: A Spiritual Theology of Ascent and Ascension* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2010), 243.

³⁶ *Institutes*, 1.5.3; 1.5.5; 1.5.10; 1.5.14; 1.7.4; 1.7.5; 1.9.1; 1.9.2; 1.9.3; 1.13.15; 2.10.7; 3.1.1; 3.1.3; 3.2.6.

such life energy in *God's Word*... Rather, I mean that special mode which both illumines the souls of the pious into the knowledge of God and, in a sense, *joins them to him*(God).”³⁷ the Gospel (“Although, therefore, Christ offers us *in the gospel* a present fullness of benefits... We enjoy Christ only *as we embrace Christ* clad in his own promises. Thus it comes to pass that *he indeed dwells in our hearts* [cf. Eph. 3:17]...”),³⁸ the knowledge of God or the knowledge of Christ (“The same apostle also, even if he somewhere denies that God is to be sought far off, inasmuch as *he dwells within us* [Acts 17:27]... Therefore, although the Lord does not want for testimony while he sweetly attracts men to *the knowledge of himself* with many and varied kindnesses...”),³⁹ epistemology (“But I reply: *the testimony of the Spirit is more excellent than all reason*. For as God alone is a fit witness of himself in his Word, *so also the Word will not find acceptance in men's hearts before it is sealed by the inward testimony of the Spirit*. The same Spirit, therefore... must penetrate into our hearts to persuade us...”),⁴⁰ Christian philosophy (“But *the Christian philosophy* bids reason give way to, submit and subject itself to, *the Holy Spirit so that the man himself may no longer live but hear Christ living and reigning within him* [Gal. 2:20].”),⁴¹ the law (“The third and principal use, which pertains more closely to the proper purpose of *the law*, finds its place *among believers in whose hearts the Spirit of God already lives and reigns*.”),⁴² the Ten Commandments (“*EXPLANATION OF THE MORAL LAW (THE TEN COMMANDMENTS)*; Indeed, *the union by which he(God) binds us to himself when he receives us* into the bosom of the church is like sacred wedlock, which must rest upon mutual faithfulness [Eph. 5:29-32]. As he performs all the duties of a true and faithful husband, of us in return he demands love and conjugal chastity.”),⁴³ and covenant (“Secondly, *the covenant by which they were bound to the Lord*... Thirdly, they had and knew Christ as Mediator, *through whom they were joined to God* and were to share in *his promises*.”).⁴⁴

With regard to the inter-relationship between the doctrine of the Scriptures (of doctrine of the Word) and ‘union with the Triune God’ thought more specifically, Calvin emphasizes that if the Scriptures function as the Word of God, two works of the Holy Spirit

³⁷ *Institutes*, 2.10.7; 1.7.4; 1.7.5; 1.8.13; 1.9.1; 1.9.2; 1.9.3; 2.10.2; 2.10.23; 2.11.11; 3.1.2; 3.1.3; 3.20.21.

³⁸ *Institutes*, 2.9.3; 2.9.4; 2.11.10; 3.1.1; 3.1.4; 3.2.6; 3.3.1; 3.6.4; 3.24.5; 4.1.1.

³⁹ *Institutes*, 1.5.14; 1.5.3; 1.5.5; 1.5.10; 1.9.3; 1.15.6; 2.2.16; 2.6.1; 2.6.4; 2.10.7; 2.12.4; 3.2.7; 3.2.8.

⁴⁰ *Institutes*, 1.7.4; 1.7.5; 1.9.2; 1.15.6; 2.1.1; 2.2.19; 2.3.6; 3.1.4; 3.2.1; 3.2.8; 3.2.14; 3.11.12; 4.17.5; 4.17.6; 4.17.11.

⁴¹ *Institutes*, 3.7.1.

⁴² *Institutes*, 2.7.12; 2.7.11; 2.8.13; 2.8.18; 2.8.29; 2.8.30; 2.8.31; 2.8.34; 2.8.40; 2.8.51; 2.8.57; 2.9.3; 2.9.4; 2.11.10; 3.17.6.

⁴³ *Institutes*, 2.8.18; 2.8.13.

⁴⁴ *Institutes*, 2.10.2; 2.10.8; 2.10.15; 2.11.10; 3.14.6; 3.17.6; 3.22.6; 4.17.1; 4.17.20.

are necessary: Firstly, the Holy Spirit, who is the author of the Scriptures, should speak in the Word. Additionally, the Holy Spirit, who is the messenger of the Word, should testify inwardly in us, uniting with us. Calvin's statements explain this clearly:

We ought to remember what I said a bit ago: credibility of doctrine is not established until we are persuaded beyond doubt that God is its Author. *Thus, the highest proof of Scripture derives in general from the fact that God in person speaks in it...* But I reply: the testimony of the Spirit is more excellent than all reason. For as God alone is a fit witness of himself in his Word, *so also the Word will not find acceptance in men's hearts before it is sealed by the inward testimony of the Spirit.* The same Spirit, therefore, who has spoken through the mouths of the prophets *must penetrate into our hearts to persuade us* that they faithfully proclaimed what had been divinely commanded⁴⁵ (own emphasis).

He (the Holy Spirit) ought to be sufficient for us as soon as he penetrates into us. But lest under his sign the spirit of Satan should creep in, *he would have us recognize him in his own image, which he has stamped upon the Scriptures.* He is the Author of the Scriptures: he cannot vary and differ from himself. Hence he must ever remain just as he once revealed himself there⁴⁶ (own emphasis).

In the same manner, there is a close inter-connection between the doctrine of the Scriptures and 'union with the Triune God' thought (or 'union with the Holy Spirit' thought). In addition, how can the Scriptures, which are the Word of God, function as the true Word of God to us? It is very closely related to the fact that the Holy Spirit should dwell in us, and should testify inwardly. From this point of view, where the Word of God speaks, at the same time, the work of the Holy Spirit and 'union with the Triune God' thought should also be heard.

7.2.1.2. The Doctrine of God

With regard to the doctrine of God,⁴⁷ the "union with Christ" thought can be viewed as being inter-connected with the following doctrines: the wisdom of God ("Yet we comprehend their chief purpose, their value, and the reason why we should ponder them, only when we descend into ourselves and contemplate by what means the *Lord shows in us his life, wisdom, and power; and exercises in our behalf his righteousness, goodness, and mercy...*

⁴⁵ *Institutes*, 1.7.4.

⁴⁶ *Institutes*, 1.9.2.

⁴⁷ *Institutes*, 1.2.1; 1.5.3; 1.5.5; 1.5.6; 1.5.10; 1.5.14; 2.8.13; 2.8.18; 3.11.1; 3.11.12.

...that *God's wonderful wisdom* here abounds more than the hairs of our head [cf. Ps. 40:12].”),⁴⁸ the love of God (“Therefore, by *his love* God the Father goes before and anticipates our reconciliation in Christ. Indeed, “because *he first loved us*” [1 John 4:19], he afterward reconciles us to himself... Hence, *we can be fully and firmly joined with God only when Christ joins us with him.*”),⁴⁹ the grace of God (“On the other hand, it behooves us to consider the sort of remedy by which *divine grace* corrects and cures the corruption of nature... ...that *believers are from God in Christ*” [Eph. 1:1; 1 Cor. 8:6].”),⁵⁰ the mercy (generosity) of God (“By proclaiming the Kingdom of God, he was calling them to faith, for by the Kingdom of God, which he taught was at hand, he meant the forgiveness of sins, salvation, life, and *utterly everything that we obtain in Christ*... First he declares that *the treasures of God's mercy* have been opened in himself...”),⁵¹ the eternity of God (“If the godly do not cease to be established before the Lord despite the destruction of heaven and earth, it follows that *their salvation is joined to God's eternity*.”),⁵² the glory of God (“...that *God's glory* shone not only in the exceptional gifts with which Adam had been adorned, but that *God dwelt essentially in him*. I admit that Adam bore God's image, in so far as *he was joined to God*...”),⁵³ the sovereignty of God (“The Father has given all power to the Son that he may by the Son's hand govern, nourish, and sustain us, keep us in his care, and help us. Thus, while for the short time we wander away from God, *Christ stands in our midst, to lead us little by little to a firm union with God*... Thus Paul rightly infers: *God will then of himself become the sole Head of the church* will have been accomplished. For the same reason, Scripture usually calls Christ “Lord” *because the Father set Christ over us to exercise his dominion through his son.*”),⁵⁴ the wrath of God (“*God's wrath* against unrighteousness; his love precedes our reconciliation in Christ: But until Christ succours us by his death, the unrighteousness that deserves *God's indignation* remains in us, and is accursed and condemned before him. Hence, *we can be fully and firmly joined with God only when Christ joins us with him.*”),⁵⁵ the will of God (“And surely unless *he (God) worked inwardly in*

⁴⁸ *Institutes*, 1.5.10; 1.5.3.

⁴⁹ *Institutes*, 2.16.3; 2.17.2; 3.1.2; 3.2.12; 3.2.12.

⁵⁰ *Institutes*, 2.3.6; 2.3.10; 2.3.11; 2.5.15; 2.8.57; 2.10.4; 2.13.2; 2.16.3; 2.17.1; 2.17.2; 3.2.24; 3.14.9; 3.17.1; 3.18.3; 3.25.10; 4.1.3; 4.15.6; 4.16.18.

⁵¹ *Institutes*, 3.3.19; 1.5.10; 2.10.2; 2.11.11; 3.2.30; 3.14.9; 3.17.11; 3.18.3; 4.1.3; 4.1.21; 4.15.6; 4.17.42.

⁵² *Institutes*, 2.10.15; 3.11.9.

⁵³ *Institutes*, 2.12.6; 2.16.13; 3.6.2; 3.6.3.

⁵⁴ *Institutes*, 2.15.5.

⁵⁵ *Institutes*, 2.16.3; 2.17.2.

men's minds... To sum up, since *God's will* is said to be the cause of all things...⁵⁶ the righteousness of God (*"I do not deny that God reforms us by his Spirit into holiness and righteousness of life... Then, although righteousness comes forth to us from the secret wellspring of his divinity..."*),⁵⁷ the doctrine of God's providence (*"...I have made his (God's) providence the determinative principle for in the elect, who are ruled by the Holy Spirit..."*),⁵⁸ the image of God (*imago Dei*) (*"I answer, on the contrary, that even if the Son of God had never taken human flesh, the image of God would nonetheless have shone in his body and soul. For in the radiance of this image, it is always manifest that Christ is truly the Head and holds the primacy in all things... For Paul did not mean to tell in what sense Adam uttered the words, but to set forth under the figure and likeness of marriage the holy union that makes us one with Christ."*),⁵⁹ the doctrine of creation (*"For Paul concludes that we are the temple of God from the fact that his Spirit dwells in us [1 Cor. 3:16-17; 6:19; 2 Cor. 6:16]... I deliberately omit many testimonies that the church fathers used. They thought it justifiable to cite from David, "By the word of the Lord the heavens established, and all their power by the spirit of his mouth" [Ps. 33:6 p.], to prove that the universe was no less the work of the Holy Spirit than of the Son."*),⁶⁰ new creation or new life (*"...that believers are from God in Christ"* [Eph. 1:1; 1 Cor. 8:6]. Here he clearly commends *the new creation*, which sweeps away everything of our common nature.),⁶¹ angelology (*"...unless they (the angels) keep us in the one Mediator, Christ, that we may wholly depend upon him, lean upon him, be brought to him, and rest in him."*),⁶² Satan or evil (*"As he puts it, "The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet."* [Rom. 16:20.] *In our Head*, indeed, this victory always fully existed, for *the prince of the world* had nothing in him [John 14:30].),⁶³ and Deification (*"Indeed, Peter declares that believers are called in this to become partakers of the divine nature [2 Peter 1:4]. How is this?... If the Lord will share his glory, power, and righteousness with the elect—nay, will give himself to be enjoyed by them and, what is more excellent, will somehow make them to become one with himself,* let us remember that every sort of happiness

⁵⁶ *Institutes*, 2.12.5; 3.16.2.

⁵⁷ *Institutes*, 3.11.12; 3.11.22; 3.11.23.

⁵⁸ *Institutes*, 1.18.2; 2.2.16; 2.3.9; 2.3.10; 3.14.18.

⁵⁹ *Institutes*, 2.12.7; 2.12.6; 3.3.9; 3.6.3; 3.17.5.

⁶⁰ *Institutes*, 1.13.15; 1.15.4; 1.15.5; 1.15.6; 2.1.5; 2.2.1; 2.3.6; 2.12.4; 2.12.6; 2.12.7; 4.17.8.

⁶¹ *Institutes*, 2.3.6; 1.9.3; 2.1.1; 2.3.8; 2.16.13; 3.1.2; 3.1.3; 3.1.4; 3.11.12; 3.15.8; 3.16.2; 3.17.5; 4.15.5; 4.15.6; 4.16.2; 4.17.1; 4.17.4; 4.17.5.

⁶² *Institutes*, 1.14.12; 2.12.4; 2.12.6.

⁶³ *Institutes*, 1.14.18.

is included under this benefit.”).⁶⁴

If we examine the notion of “new creation (or new life)” in more detail we realize that the related theological themes have a close inter-relationship with ‘union with the Triune God’ or “union with Christ” thought. By drawing on the Old and New Testaments as basis, Calvin states that as believers we are “the new creation” who have accomplished the union with the Triune God, and he explains this re-creation (or “the second creation”) or “newness of life,” as follows:

In order that no one should make an excuse that good is initiated by the Lord to help the will which by itself is weak, the Spirit elsewhere declares what the will, left to itself, is capable of doing: “*A new heart shall I give you, and will put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh, and give you’re a heart of flesh. And I shall put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes*” (Ezek. 36:26-27)... From this, one may easily infer, as I have said, that everything good in the will is the work of grace alone. In this sense he says elsewhere: “*It is God who works all things in all*” (1 Cor. 12:6 p.). There he is not discussing universal governance, but is uttering praise to the one God for all good things in which believers excel. Now by saying “all” he surely makes God the author of spiritual life from beginning to end. Previously he had taught the same thing in other words: *that believers are from God in Christ* (Eph. 1:1; 1 Cor. 8:6). Here *he clearly commends the new creation*, which sweeps away everything of our common nature. We ought to understand here an antithesis between Adam and Christ, which he explains more clearly in another place, where he teaches that “*we are his workmanship, created in Christ for good works*, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them” (Eph. 2:10, cf. Vg.). For he would prove our salvation a free gift (cf. Eph. 2:5), *because the beginning of every good is from the second creation*, which we attain in Christ. And yet if even the least ability came from ourselves, we would also have some share of the merit. But Paul, to strip us, argues that we deserve nothing because “*we have been created in Christ...* for good works which God prepared beforehand” (Eph. 2:10, cf. Vg.). He means by these words that all parts of good works from their first impulse belong to God⁶⁵ (own emphasis).

Further, as we explained above that the mortification of our flesh depends upon participation in his cross, so we must understand that we obtain a corresponding benefit from his resurrection. The apostle says: “*We were engrafted in the likeness of his death*, so that sharing in his resurrection *we might walk in newness of life*” (Rom. 6:4 p.)... By these words we are not only invited through the example of the risen Christ to strive after newness of life; but we are taught that we are reborn into righteousness through his

⁶⁴ *Institutes*, 1.5.5; 3.11.6; 3.25.10.

⁶⁵ *Institutes*, 2.3.6.

power⁶⁶ (own emphasis).

In the same manner, there is a close inter-relationship between the “union with Christ” thought and the theological theme of “the new creation” which presents an important theological meaning to us as believers; for “if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation” (2 Co. 5:17). This means that he or she becomes a new being who has been united with Christ. As beings who have been united with Christ, we become new beings, completely different than before; that is, we are born again in the identity of beings who have been entrusted with the threefold offices of Christ as priest, prophet, and king, as beings who have become the blessed way that expands the Kingdom of God in this world, as beings who accomplish the work of the Holy Spirit together with Himself, as beings who can enjoy all Christ’s benefits, blessings, goodness, and even his suffering.

7.2.1.3. The Doctrine of the Triune God

The doctrine of the Triune God is the most comprehensive among the theological themes that show an inter-relationship with “union with Christ” or ‘union with the Triune God’ thought in the *Institutes*. In the doctrine of the Triune God,⁶⁷ the thought is shown to be inter-connected with the following doctrinal trinitarian themes: ‘union with the Triune God’ or ‘union with God’ (“Hence it is quite clear that in *God’s essence reside three persons in whom on God is known*. Indeed, faith ought not to gaze hither and thither, nor to discourse of various matters, but to look upon the one God, *to unite with him, to cleave to him*.”),⁶⁸ Pneumatology (“For this reason, *the Spirit is sometimes called the “Spirit of the Father,” sometimes the “Spirit of the Son.*” Paul says: “You are not in the flesh, but in the spirit, if indeed *the Spirit of God dwells in you*. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not his” [Rom. 8:9, cf. Vg.]”),⁶⁹ the gift of the Holy Spirit (“From this we infer that *he rules—inwardly and outwardly*—more for our own sake than his. Hence we are furnished, as far as God knows to be expedient for us, with *the gifts of the Spirit*, which we lack by nature. By these first fruits we may perceive that *we are truly joined to God* in perfect

⁶⁶ *Institutes*, 2.16.13.

⁶⁷ *Institutes*, 1.13.15; 1.13.16; 1.13.24; 2.12.1; 2.12.2; 2.12.3; 3.1.1; 3.1.2; 3.11.5; 3.11.9; 4.15.6.

⁶⁸ *Institutes*, 1.13.16; 1.5.14; 1.13.24; 1.15.6; 2.3.9; 2.3.10; 2.8.18; 2.8.51; 2.11.11; 2.12.1; 2.15.4; 2.15.5; 2.16.3; 3.6.2; 3.7.3; 3.11.1; 3.11.5; 3.14.6; 3.14.9; 3.14.18; 3.15.6; 3.17.6; 3.18.3; 3.20.1; 3.25.2; 3.25.10; 4.1.2; 4.17.33.

⁶⁹ *Institutes*, 3.1.2; 1.13.15; 2.16.14; 3.1.1; 3.1.3; 3.7.1; 3.24.2; 3.25.3; 4.1.2; 4.1.3; 4.14.16; 4.15.6.

blessedness.”),⁷⁰ and the doctrine of the Holy Spirit’s work, or the power of the Holy Spirit, or ‘union with the Holy Spirit’ (“We ought to understand the statement that *the Spirit of God dwells only in believers* [Rom. 8:9] as referring to *the Spirit of sanctification through whom we are consecrated as temples to God* [1 Cor. 3:16]. Nonetheless he fills, moves, and quickens all things by *the power of the same Spirit*, and does so according to the character that he bestowed upon each kind by the law of creation.”).⁷¹

More specifically, examination of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit’s work (or the power of the Holy Spirit, union with the Holy Spirit) shows that it has been dealt with as having a close inter-relationship with the “union with Christ” thought in Calvin’s theology. As I have mentioned before, therefore, to call Calvin “the theologian of the Holy Spirit,” is not an exaggeration. By utilizing the doctrine of the Triune God as a basis, Calvin emphasizes that the Holy Spirit is the main substance who unites with Christ and with us, as follows:

Also, we ought to know that *he is called the “Spirit of Christ” not only because Christ, as eternal Word of God, is joined in the same Spirit with the Father*, but also from his character as the Mediator... In this sense he is called the “Second Adam,” given from heaven as “a life-giving spirit” (1 Cor. 15:45). *This unique life which the Son of God inspires in his own so that they become one with him*, Paul here contrasts with that natural life which is common also to the wicked. Likewise, he asks “the grace of... Christ and the love of God” for believers, and the same time coupling with it “participation in the... Spirit” (2 Cor. 13:14), without which no one can taste either the fatherly favor of God or the beneficence of Christ; just as he also says in another passage, “The love of God has been poured into our hearts through *the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us*” (Rom. 5:5, cf. Vg.)⁷² (own emphasis).

Even though it seems unbelievable that Christ’s flesh, separated from us by such great distance, penetrates to us, so that it becomes our food, let us remember how far the secret power of the Holy Spirit towers above all our senses, and how foolish it is to wish to measure his immeasurableness by our measure. What, then, our mind does not comprehend, let faith conceive: *that the Spirit truly unites things separated in space*⁷³ (own emphasis).

⁷⁰ *Institutes*, 2.15.4; 3.1.2; 3.17.5.

⁷¹ *Institutes*, 1.7.4; 1.8.13; 1.9.1; 1.9.3; 1.14.18; 1.18.2; 2.2.16; 2.3.6; 2.3.10; 2.5.15; 2.7.11; 2.7.12; 2.8.34; 2.8.57; 2.9.3; 2.11.10; 2.12.1; 2.12.7; 2.13.2; 2.15.4; 2.15.5; 2.16.14; 3.1.1; 3.1.2; 3.1.3; 3.1.4; 3.2.8; 3.2.12; 3.2.33; 3.2.35; 3.2.39; 3.3.2; 3.3.14; 3.3.20; 3.3.23; 3.4.20; 3.6.3; 3.7.1; 3.11.5; 3.11.12; 3.14.9; 3.14.19; 3.17.5; 3.17.6; 3.18.1; 3.20.5; 3.24.2; 3.25.3; 4.15.6; 4.17.10; 4.17.12; 4.17.18; 4.17.26; 4.17.28; 4.17.31; 4.17.33; 4.17.34.

⁷² *Institutes*, 3.1.2.

⁷³ *Institutes*, 4.17.10.

In the same manner, the Holy Spirit, as the Spirit of God the Father and of Jesus Christ the Son, is the main agent who unites the Triune God, and also accomplishes the “mystical union” between Christ and us. If seen from this point of view, God the Holy Spirit is also the main agent animating all mystical elements that have existed in our belief. Therefore, we can live as blessed beings who have accomplished the “mystical union” with Christ in the Holy Spirit.

7.2.1.4. Christology

On the other hand, in Christology⁷⁴ the thought has been dealt with as having an inter-relationship with the following related doctrinal themes: the doctrine of the incarnation (“For from the time that *Christ was manifested in the flesh*, he has been called the Son of God, not only in that he was the eternal Word begotten before all ages from the Father, but because he took upon himself the person and office of the Mediator, that *he might join us to God*.”),⁷⁵ Christ’s hypostatic union (“Hence, it was necessary for the Son of God to become for us “Immanuel, that is, God with us” [Isa. 7:14; Matt. 1:23], and in such a way that *his divinity and our human nature might by mutual connection* grow together. Otherwise the nearness would not have been near enough, nor the affinity sufficiently firm, for us to hope that *God might dwell with us*.”),⁷⁶ the doctrine of human nature (or person) of Christ, (“The Mediator must be true God and true man: ...for *God’s natural Son fashioned for himself a body from our body, flesh from our flesh, bones from our bones, that he might be one with us* [Gen. 2:23-24, mediated through Eph. 5:29-31]. Ungrudgingly he took our nature upon himself to impart to us what was his, and to become both Son of God and Son of man in common with us. Hence that holy brotherhood which he commends with his own lips when he says: “I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God” [John 20:17].”)⁷⁷ the doctrine of the Christ’s work, or Christ’s meritorious deed (“*Only he who was true God and true man could bridge the gulf between God and ourselves*: ...Therefore, lest anyone be troubled about where to seek the Mediator, or by what path we must come to him, the Spirit calls him “man,” thus teaching us that *he is near us, indeed touches us, since he is our*

⁷⁴ *Institutes*, 2.11.11; 2.12.1; 2.12.4; 2.14.3; 2.15.2; 2.15.3; 2.15.5; 2.16.19; 3.1.1; 3.1.2; 3.2.1; 3.11.5; 4.17.28; 4.17.30.

⁷⁵ *Institutes*, 1.13.24; 2.12.1; 2.12.4; 2.12.5; 2.12.7; 4.17.8.

⁷⁶ *Institutes*, 2.12.1; 2.12.2; 2.12.3; 2.13.2; 4.17.30.

⁷⁷ *Institutes*, 2.12.2; 1.13.24; 2.12.1; 2.12.3; 2.12.5; 2.13.1; 2.13.2; 2.14.3; 2.15.5; 2.17.1; 2.17.2; 3.1.4; 3.2.1; 3.11.5; 4.17.2; 4.17.28; 4.17.30.

flesh.”),⁷⁸ the doctrine of the threefold offices of Christ (“*TO KNOW THE PURPOSE FOR WHICH CHRIST WAS SENT BY THE FATHER, AND WHAT HE CONFERRED UPON US, WE MUST LOOK ABOVE ALL AT THREE THINGS IN HIM: THE PROPHETIC OFFICE, KINGSHIP, AND PRISETHOOD*: ...On the other hand, we must note this: *he received anointing, not only for himself that he might carry out the office of teaching, but for his whole body (the whole of church)* that the power of the Spirit might be present in the continuing preaching of the gospel”),⁷⁹ the doctrine of reconciliation (““But when the fullness of time came” [Gal. 4:4] which was appointed for the restoration of all things, *he was revealed as the reconciler of God and men*; “the wall” that for so long had confined God’s mercy within the boundaries of Israel “was broken down” [Eph. 2:14]. ...but “*Christ is all in all*” [Col. 3:11, cf. Vg.]”),⁸⁰ the doctrine of atonement (“Therefore, by his love God the Father goes before and anticipates our reconciliation in Christ. Indeed, “because he first loved us” [1 John 4:19], he afterward reconciles us to himself. But until *Christ succors us by his death*, the unrighteousness that deserves God’s indignation remains in us, and is accursed and condemned before him. Hence, *we can be fully and firmly joined with God only when Christ joins us with him.*”),⁸¹ forgiveness of the sin (“Since *faith embraces Christ, as offered to us by the Father* [cf. John 6:29]—that is, since he is offered not only for righteousness, *forgiveness of sins*, and peace, but also for sanctification [cf. 1 Cor. 1:30] and the fountain of the water of life [John 7:38; cf. ch. 4:14]...”),⁸² the doctrine of the Cross (“Both things happen to *us by participation in Christ*. For if *we truly partake in his death*, “*our old man is crucified by his power, and the body of sin perishes*” [Rom. 6:6 p.], that the corruption of original nature may no longer thrive.”),⁸³ the death of Christ, or the doctrine of ‘one for all’ (“...that it is he who purifies and washes away sins, and wipes out the remembrance of them; that it is he who makes us sharers in *his death*, who deprives Satan of his rule, who weakens the power of our lust; indeed, that *it is he who comes into a unity with us so that, having put on Christ, we may be acknowledged God’s children.*”),⁸⁴ Christ’s resurrection (“Further, as we explained above that the mortification of our flesh depends upon participation in his cross, so we must

⁷⁸ *Institutes*, 2.12.1; 1.13.24; 2.12.2; 2.12.5; 2.15.5; 2.15.6; 2.16.7; 2.17.1; 3.2.8; 3.2.12; 3.11.1; 4.1.21; 4.17.18; 4.17.26.

⁷⁹ *Institutes*, 2.15.1; 2.15.2; 2.15.3; 2.15.4; 2.15.5; 2.15.6.

⁸⁰ *Institutes*, 2.11.11; 2.12.2; 2.12.3; 2.15.6; 2.16.3; 2.17.2; 2.17.5; 3.2.30; 3.11.1; 3.11.21.

⁸¹ *Institutes*, 2.16.3; 2.12.3; 2.15.6; 2.16.7; 2.17.5; 3.11.9; 3.11.22; 3.11.23.

⁸² *Institutes*, 3.2.8; 2.12.5; 2.15.6; 2.16.3; 2.16.13; 2.17.2; 3.2.24; 3.3.9; 3.3.19; 3.3.20; 3.4.28; 3.11.21; 3.17.10; 4.1.21.

⁸³ *Institutes*, 3.3.9; 2.16.7; 3.8.1; 3.16.2; 4.17.5; 4.17.28; 4.17.33.

⁸⁴ *Institutes*, 4.15.14; 2.12.3; 2.15.6; 2.16.3; 2.16.13; 2.17.5; 3.3.9; 3.3.20; 3.16.2; 4.15.5; 4.15.6; 4.16.2; 4.17.1; 4.17.4; 4.17.5; 4.17.33.

understand that we obtain a corresponding benefit from *his resurrection*. The apostle says: “*We were engrafted in the likeness of his death, so that sharing in his resurrection we might walk in newness of life*” [Rom. 6:4 p.]”,⁸⁵ the doctrine of Christ as mediator (“FALLEN MAN OUGHT TO SEEK REDEMPTION IN CHRIST (Through *the Mediator*, God is seen as a gracious Father, 1-2); Only *the Mediator* helps fallen man: ...Moreover, it is quite unfitting that those not *engrafted into the body of the only-begotten Son* are considered to have the place and rank of children.”),⁸⁶ Christ’s reign (“Until he comes forth as judge of the world *Christ will therefore reign, joining us to the Father* as the measure of our weakness permits.”),⁸⁷ the ascension of Christ (“*Benefits imparted to our faith by Christ’s ascension*: From this our faith receives many benefits... ..that in a sense we already “*sit with God in the heavenly places in him*” [Eph. 2:6], so that we do not await heaven with a bare hope, but *in our Head already possess it*.”),⁸⁸ and Christ’s indwelling, or the Holy Spirit’s indwelling (“But by his ascension he fulfilled what he had promised: that *he would be with us even to the end of the world*... “...For *his spiritual presence with them* was to come after his ascension.””).⁸⁹

If we furthermore examine the doctrine of the threefold offices of Christ in more detail, it features as having an inter-relationship with the “union with Christ” thought in Calvin’s theology. This fact also emerges in Calvin’s following statements:

Now it is to be noted that the title “Christ” pertains to these three offices (*prophet, priest, king*)... We see that he was anointed by the Spirit to be herald and witness of the Father’s grace. And that not in the common way — for he is distinguished from other teachers with a similar office. On the other hand, *we must note this: he received anointing, not only for himself that he might carry out the office of teaching, but for his whole body (the whole of church)* that the power of the Spirit might be present in the continuing preaching of the gospel... *Then this anointing was diffused from the Head (Christ) to the members (believers)*, as Joel had foretold: “Your sons shall prophesy and your daughters... shall see visions,” etc. (Joel 2:28 p.)... *That is, outside Christ there is nothing worth knowing, and all who by faith perceive what he is like have grasped the whole immensity of heavenly benefits*. For this reason, Paul writes in another passage: “I decided to know nothing precious... except Jesus Christ and him

⁸⁵ *Institutes*, 2.16.13; 2.15.3; 3.3.9; 3.3.20; 3.25.3; 4.1.21; 4.15.6; 4.17.4.

⁸⁶ *Institutes*, 2.6.1; 1.13.24; 2.6.4; 2.10.2; 2.10.4; 2.11.10; 2.11.11; 2.12.1; 2.12.7; 2.14.3; 2.15.6; 2.16.16; 3.1.2; 3.2.1; 3.15.5; 3.20.19; 3.20.20; 3.20.21; 4.15.6; 4.17.30; 4.18.10.

⁸⁷ *Institutes*, 2.14.3; 2.15.3; 2.15.4; 2.15.5; 2.16.14; 2.16.15; 3.7.1; 3.11.7; 4.8.11; 4.15.14; 4.17.18.

⁸⁸ *Institutes*, 2.16.16; 2.16.14.

⁸⁹ *Institutes*, 2.16.14; 3.2.39; 4.6.10; 4.8.11; 4.17.3; 4.17.10; 4.17.12; 4.17.16; 4.17.18; 4.17.19; 4.17.26; 4.17.28; 4.17.30; 4.17.31; 4.17.32.

crucified” (1 Cor. 2:2 p.). This is very true, because it is not lawful to go beyond the simplicity of the gospel. And the prophetic dignity in Christ leads us to know that in the sum of doctrine as he has given it to us all parts of perfect wisdom are contained⁹⁰ (own emphasis).

Now, *Christ plays the priestly role*, not only to render the Father favourable and propitious toward us by an eternal law of reconciliation, *but also to receive us as his companions in this great office* (Rev. 1:6). For we who are defiled in ourselves, *yet are priests in him*, offer ourselves and our all to God, and freely enter the heavenly sanctuary that the sacrifices of prayers and praise that we bring may be acceptable and sweet-smelling before God⁹¹ (own emphasis).

In the same manner, Calvin has emphasizes that the office of Christ has been entrusted to us as believers through our union with Him. From this point of view, our identity as believers transcends the level of mere disciples of Christ, and renders us as ‘little Christs,’ entrusted with Christ’s office through our union with Him. As mentioned, this is the important reason that our Christian identity, status, mission, and role should be reorganized theologically from the viewpoint of the “union with Christ” thought.

7.2.1.5. Anthropology

In anthropology⁹² the “union with Christ” thought can be seen as being inter-connected with the following related doctrinal themes: the doctrine of sin, or depravity (“The Father has chosen us in Christ before the foundation of the world” [Eph. 1:4] to adopt us as sons “according to the purpose of his will” [Eph. 1:5, cf. Vg.]; ...and “*he has made us accepted in his beloved Son*” [Eph. 1:6, cf. KJV], “in whom we have redemption through his blood” [Eph. 1:7, Vg.]. Here, surely, *the fall of Adam* is not presupposed as preceding God’s decree in time; but it is what God determined before all ages that is shown, when he willed to heal the misery of mankind.”),⁹³ free will, or will (“But inasmuch as he has made clear by his example how miserable *free will* is unless God both wills and is able to work in us... This means nothing else than that *the Lord by his Spirit directs, bends, and governs, our heart and reigns in it as in his own possession.*”),⁹⁴ deed, or work (“For the Lord cannot fail to love and embrace the good things that *he works in them through his Spirit.* But we must always

⁹⁰ *Institutes*, 2.15.2.

⁹¹ *Institutes*, 2.15.6.

⁹² *Institutes*, 1.5.5; 1.15.6; 2.1.5; 2.2.1; 2.2.16.

⁹³ *Institutes*, 2.12.5; 2.1.5; 2.12.7; 3.2.24; 3.3.23; 3.11.21.

⁹⁴ *Institutes*, 2.3.6; 2.3.8; 2.3.9; 2.3.10; 2.5.15; 2.8.29; 3.23.14.

remember that God “accepts” believers by reason of *works* only because he is their source and graciously, by way of adding to his liberality, deigns also to show “acceptance” toward the good *works* he has himself bestowed.”),⁹⁵ conscience (“*A conscience* so founded, erected, and established is established also in the consideration of works, so far, that is, as these are testimonies of *God dwelling and ruling in us*.”),⁹⁶ life (“Now by saying “all” he surely makes God the author of *spiritual life* from beginning to end. Previously he had taught the same thing in other words: that *believers are from God in Christ*” [Eph. 1:1; 1 Cor. 8:6].”),⁹⁷ body and spirit (“For he did not declare that he would be a God to *their bodies* alone, but especially to *their souls*. Still, souls, *unless they be joined to God* through righteousness, remain estranged from him in death. On the other hand, *such a union when present will bring everlasting salvation with it*.”),⁹⁸ and reason (“And if human happiness, whose perfection it is to *be united with God*, were hidden from man, he would in fact be bereft of the principal use of his understanding. Thus, also, the chief activity of the soul is to aspire thither. Hence the more anyone endeavors to approach to God, the more he proves himself endowed with *reason*.”).⁹⁹

Furthermore, examination of the theological themes of ‘reason’ and ‘will,’ show them as having an inter-relationship with the “union with Christ” thought. Calvin acknowledges our human independent will and the reason for the original nature. By using the Scriptures as basis, however, he emphasizes that as believers, living as people who have been united with Christ in the Holy Spirit, we should entrust reason and will to Him who dwells in us:

If we, then, are not our own (cf. 1 Cor. 6:19) but the Lord's, it is clear what error we must flee, and whither we must direct all the acts of our life. We are not our own: let not our reason nor our will, therefore, sway our plans and deeds. We are not our own: let us therefore, not set it as our goal to seek what is expedient for us according to the flesh. We are not our own: in so far as we can, let us therefore forget ourselves and all that is ours. Conversely, we are God's: let us therefore live for him and die for him. We are God's: let his wisdom and will therefore rule all our actions. We are God's: let all the parts of our life accordingly strive toward him as our only lawful goal (Rom. 14:8; cf. 1 Cor. 6:19)... But the Christian Philosophy bids reason give way to, submit and subject itself to, the Holy Spirit so that

⁹⁵ *Institutes*, 3.17.5; 3.14.18; 3.14.20.

⁹⁶ *Institutes*, 3.14.18.

⁹⁷ *Institutes*, 2.3.6; 2.10.4; 2.10.7; 2.10.8; 2.17.5; 3.1.3; 3.2.13; 3.15.5; 3.15.6; 3.18.1; 3.18.3; 4.17.8; 4.17.9; 4.17.18; 4.17.32; 4.17.33; 4.17.34.

⁹⁸ *Institutes*, 2.10.8; 2.10.23; 3.2.24; 3.25.8.

⁹⁹ *Institutes*, 1.15.6; 3.7.1; 4.17.10.

the man himself may no longer live but hear Christ living and reigning within him (Gal. 2:20)¹⁰⁰ (own emphasis).

If grafted in Christ we bear fruit like a vine — which derives the energy for its growth from the moisture of the earth, from the dew of heaven, and from the quickening warmth of the sun — I see no share in good works remaining to us if we keep unimpaired what is God’s... Now Christ simply means that we are dry and worthless wood when we are separated from him, for apart from him we have no ability to do good... The first part of a good work is will; the other, a strong effort to accomplish it; the author of both is God. Therefore we are robbing the Lord if we claim for ourselves anything either in will or in accomplishment... Therefore the Lord in this way both begins and completes the good work in us. It is the Lord’s doing that the will conceives the love of what is right, is zealously inclined toward it, is aroused and moved to pursue it¹⁰¹ (own emphasis).

In the same manner, as believers who have participated in the death of Christ by faith, therefore, we should recognize that we are no longer the old self who lives according to the will and the reason of our original nature, because we have been united with Him. On the contrary, we should live with the recognition that we are human beings who entrust our will and reason to Christ who reigns in our inner world; that is, we are human beings who are ‘for Christ, by Christ, of Christ.’

7.2.1.6. Soteriology

Soteriology is the one doctrine that has been dealt with most frequently as having an inter-relationship with the “union with Christ” thought in Calvin’s theology. In soteriology,¹⁰² the thought is interlinked to the following doctrinal themes: the doctrine of predestination (“For since it is into his body *the Father has destined those to be engrafted* whom he has willed from eternity to be his own...”),¹⁰³ the doctrine of the election (“Accordingly, those whom God has adopted as his sons are said to *have been chosen* not in themselves but in his Christ [Eph. 1:4]; for unless he could love them in him, he could not honor them with the inheritance of his Kingdom if *they had not previously become partakers*

¹⁰⁰ *Institutes*, 3.7.1.

¹⁰¹ *Institutes*, 2.3.9.

¹⁰² *Institutes*, 2.3.6; 2.6.4; 2.7.17; 2.10.8; 2.10.15; 2.12.4; 2.12.5; 2.16.3; 2.16.19; 2.17.1; 2.17.5; 3.1.1; 3.1.2; 3.1.3; 3.1.4; 3.2.13; 3.2.24; 3.2.30; 3.3.9; 3.3.19; 3.15.5; 3.15.6; 3.16.1; 3.16.2; 3.16.3; 3.17.1; 3.18.1; 3.21.7; 3.22.10; 3.23.14; 3.25.3; 4.17.40.

¹⁰³ *Institutes*, 3.24.5; 2.11.11; 3.15.8; 3.23.14.

of him.”),¹⁰⁴ calling, or vocation (“We have not been *called* to uncleanness but to holiness [1 Thess. 4:7]... Ours is a *holy calling* [2 Tim. 1:9]... Again, with that argument of Paul’s: that we, if we *cleave to Christ, are members of one body* [1 Cor. 6:15, 17; 12:12], who must help one another in our mutual tasks [cf. 1 Cor. 12:25]? Can we be more forcefully summoned to holiness than when we hear again from John that “all who have this hope... sanctify themselves” because their God is holy [1 John 3:3]?”),¹⁰⁵ the doctrine of union with Christ (“*But he (Christ) unites himself to us by the Spirit alone.*”),¹⁰⁶ the doctrine of regeneration, or rebirth (“*Rebirth in Christ!*: Both things happen to us *by participation in Christ.*”),¹⁰⁷ faith (“*Since faith embraces Christ, as offered to us by the Father* [cf. John 6:29]...”),¹⁰⁸ repentance, or conversion (“Again, in Ezekiel: “*I will give them one heart and will give a new spirit in their inward parts, I will take the stony heart out of their flesh and give them a heart of flesh: [Ezek. 11:19]. He testifies that our conversion is the creation of a new spirit and a new heart.*”),¹⁰⁹ acceptance (“Now he gave us that sure communion with himself... *We are said to put on him [Rom. 13:14], to grow together into him [Eph. 4:5], that we may live because he lives...* He, I say, was our witness that the Heavenly Father will count as his sons all those *who have received him in faith.*”),¹¹⁰ the doctrine of adoption (“The Lord, having rescued man from the pit of perdition, has through *the grace of adoption* set him apart for his own. Thereupon, because *he has begotten him anew and conformed him to a new life, he now embraces him as a new creature* [cf. 2 Cor. 5:17] endowed with the gifts of his Spirit.”),¹¹¹ grace (“Thus, *him whom he receives into union with himself the Lord* is said to justify, because he cannot receive him into *grace* nor *join him to himself* unless he turns him from a sinner into a righteous man.”),¹¹² twofold grace (justification and sanctification) (“*Christ was given to us by God’s generosity, to be grasped and possessed by us in faith. By partaking of*

¹⁰⁴ *Institutes*, 3.24.5; 2.17.2; 3.2.12; 3.11.11; 3.15.5; 3.21.7; 3.22.1; 3.22.6; 3.22.7; 3.22.10; 3.24.1; 3.24.2; 3.25.10.

¹⁰⁵ *Institutes*, 3.16.2; 3.17.1; 3.24.1; 3.24.2; 3.25.10; 4.1.2.

¹⁰⁶ *Institutes*, 2.12.7; 2.15.3; 2.16.3; 2.16.7; 3.1.1; 3.1.3; 3.1.4; 3.2.24; 3.2.35; 3.2.39; 3.3.20; 3.6.3; 3.11.5; 3.11.6; 3.11.10; 3.11.21; 3.13.5; 3.15.5; 3.15.6; 3.16.1; 3.16.2; 3.17.10; 3.17.11; 3.20.1; 3.20.19; 3.21.7; 3.22.7; 3.22.10; 3.24.1; 3.24.2; 3.24.5; 3.25.3; 4.17.11; 4.17.12; 4.17.18; 4.17.28; 4.17.29; 4.17.31; 4.17.33; 4.17.34; 4.17.40; 4.17.42; 4.19.35.

¹⁰⁷ *Institutes*, 3.3.9; 2.3.1; 2.3.6; 2.3.8; 3.1.3; 3.1.4; 3.2.35; 3.14.19; 3.15.8; 3.17.5; 3.17.6; 4.14.15; 4.15.6; 4.16.2; 4.16.17.

¹⁰⁸ *Institutes*, 3.2.8; 1.7.5; 2.3.8; 2.13.2; 2.16.14; 2.17.1; 3.1.1; 3.1.4; 3.2.1; 3.2.6; 3.2.13; 3.2.24; 3.2.30; 3.2.33; 3.2.35; 3.2.39; 3.3.1; 3.3.2; 3.11.1; 3.11.7; 3.11.10; 3.13.5; 3.15.6; 3.16.1; 3.17.10; 3.17.11; 3.24.5; 4.14.9; 4.14.16; 4.17.5; 4.17.6; 4.17.10; 4.17.11; 4.17.13; 4.17.28; 4.17.32; 4.17.33; 4.17.34; 4.17.42.

¹⁰⁹ *Institutes*, 2.3.6; 2.3.8; 3.3.2; 3.3.9; 3.3.19; 3.3.20.

¹¹⁰ *Institutes*, 3.24.5; 2.12.5; 3.1.4; 3.2.6; 3.24.6; 3.25.3; 4.17.5; 4.17.6.

¹¹¹ *Institutes*, 3.17.5; 3.17.6; 3.18.3.

¹¹² *Institutes*, 2.15.5; 2.16.16; 2.17.1; 3.1.2; 3.2.24; 3.2.30; 3.11.7; 3.11.10; 3.11.21; 3.15.6; 3.16.1; 3.18.3; 3.21.7; 3.24.5; 3.25.10.

him, we principally receive *a double grace...*”),¹¹³ the doctrine of justification (“For even though God alone is the source of righteousness, and *we are righteous only by participation in him...*”),¹¹⁴ the impartation of righteousness (“We do not, therefore, contemplate him outside ourselves from afar in order that his righteousness may *be imputed to us* but because *we put on Christ and are engrafted into his body*—in short, because *he deigns to make us one with him.*”),¹¹⁵ the doctrine of sanctification (“...namely, that being reconciled to God through Christ’s blamelessness, *we may have in heaven instead of a Judge a gracious Father*; and secondly, that *sanctified by Christ’s spirit* we may cultivate blamelessness and purity of life.”),¹¹⁶ the guarantee of salvation (“*The indestructible certainty of faith rests upon Christ’s oneness with us: ...that Christ is not outside us but dwells within us. Not only does he cleave to us by an indivisible bond of fellowship, but with a wonderful communion, day by day, he grow more and more into one body with us, until he becomes completely one with us.*”),¹¹⁷ the conviction of victory (“...*our common nature with Christ is the pledge of our fellowship with the Son of God*; and clothed with our flesh he vanquished death and sin together that *the victory and triumph might be ours.*”),¹¹⁸ the perseverance of the saints (“...but *Christ does not allow any of those whom he has once for all engrafted into his body to perish* [John 10:28]; for in preserving their salvation he will perform what he has promised...”),¹¹⁹ and the doctrine of glorification (“Once *they are, by knowledge of the gospel and illumination of the Holy Spirit, called into the fellowship of Christ, eternal life begins in them.* Now that God has begun a good work in them, it must also be made perfect until the Day of the Lord Jesus [Phil. 1:6]. *It is, however, made perfect when, resembling their Heavenly Father in righteousness and holiness, they prove themselves sons true to their nature.*”).¹²⁰

If we examine the doctrine of justification among them in more detail, it has also been dealt with as having a very close inter-relationship with “union with Christ” thought. Calvin frequently emphasizes the doctrine of justification, that we are justified by God as a result of union with Christ in his theology:

¹¹³ *Institutes*, 3.11.1; 3.11.11.

¹¹⁴ *Institutes*, 3.11.8; 3.5.2; 3.5.5; 3.11.1; 3.11.3; 3.11.4; 3.11.5; 3.11.6; 3.11.7; 3.11.9; 3.11.11; 3.11.21; 3.11.23; 3.13.5; 3.15.5; 3.15.6; 3.16.1; 3.17.10; 3.17.11; 4.17.42.

¹¹⁵ *Institutes*, 3.11.10; 2.15.4; 2.17.5; 3.11.3; 3.15.5; 3.16.3; 3.17.11; 4.17.2.

¹¹⁶ *Institutes*, 3.11.1; 2.8.29; 2.16.16; 3.2.8; 3.2.24; 3.3.14; 3.11.12; 3.16.2; 3.17.6; 4.1.21; 4.14.14; 4.14.15; 4.16.18.

¹¹⁷ *Institutes*, 3.2.24; 2.12.2; 2.12.3; 2.16.16; 3.1.3; 3.24.2.

¹¹⁸ *Institutes*, 2.12.3; 1.14.18; 2.16.16; 4.17.29.

¹¹⁹ *Institutes*, 3.22.7; 2.16.16; 3.2.24; 3.14.19; 3.17.6; 3.18.1; 3.22.7; 4.17.29.

¹²⁰ *Institutes*, 3.18.1; 3.2.24; 3.8.1; 3.9.6; 3.17.15; 3.20.36; 3.25.2; 3.25.3.

Now whence does this pardon arise, save that *God contemplates us and our all in Christ? Therefore, as we ourselves, when we have been engrafted in Christ, are righteous in God's sight because our iniquities are covered by Christ's sinlessness, so our works are righteous and are thus regarded because whatever fault is otherwise in them is buried in Christ's purity, and is not charged to our account.* Accordingly, we can deservedly say that by faith alone not only we ourselves but our works as well are justified¹²¹ (own emphasis).

*For he "is given unto us for righteousness, wisdom, sanctification, and redemption" (1 Cor. 1:30)... But, since the question concerns only righteousness and sanctification, let us dwell upon these. Although we may distinguish them, Christ contains both of them inseparably in himself. Do you wish, then, to attain righteousness in Christ? You must first possess Christ; but you cannot possess him without being made partaker in his sanctification, because he cannot be divided into pieces (1 Cor. 1:13). Since, therefore, it is solely by expending himself that the Lord gives us these benefits to enjoy, he bestows both of them at the same, the one never without the other. Thus it is clear how true it is that we are justified not without works yet not through works, since in our sharing in Christ, which justifies us, sanctification is just as much included as righteousness*¹²² (own emphasis).

In the same manner, Calvin repeatedly emphasizes the doctrine of justification, that is, we are justified by God as uniting with Christ; that is, when we participate in the death and resurrection of Christ through faith in the Holy Spirit. Accordingly, he has stated: "And when this is taken away from it, let us not think that anything is removed from Christian faith, whose nature is far otherwise. *For in what way does true faith justify save when it binds us to Christ so that, made one with him, we may enjoy participation in his righteousness?*"¹²³

From this point of view, the doctrine of justification is the doctrine that has an inseparable relation with "union with Christ" thought; that is, it is never disconnected from the thought.¹²⁴ In short, the reason of our righteousness is not through our meritorious deeds, but was caused completely by the grace and the meritorious deed of Christ, who dwells in us.

7.2.1.7. Ecclesiology

¹²¹ *Institutes*, 3.17.10.

¹²² *Institutes*, 3.16.1.

¹²³ *Institutes*, 3.17.11. See also Calvin's following statement: *Institutes*, 3.15.5.

¹²⁴ Regarding the difference of the interpretation of the relationship of "union with Christ" thought and the doctrine of justification between Calvin and other Reformed theologians, see the section in Chapter Three of this dissertation titled 'The Problem of Theological Interpretations about Calvin's Union with Christ thought.'

Ecclesiology is the one doctrine that has together with soteriology been most frequently dealt with as having an inter-relationship with the “union with Christ” thought in Calvin’s theology. In ecclesiology,¹²⁵ the thought has been dealt with as having an inter-relationship with the following doctrinal themes: the doctrine of the Sacrament (“*The sacraments have significance for us in faith in Christ: ...Therefore, the sacraments have effectiveness among us in proportion as we are helped by their ministry sometimes to foster, confirm, and increase the true knowledge of Christ in ourselves; at other times, to possess him more fully and enjoy his riches.*”),¹²⁶ the doctrine of baptism (“*Baptism as token of our union with Christ.*”),¹²⁷ the doctrine the Eucharist (“*Union with Christ as the special fruit of the Lord’s Supper.*”),¹²⁸ worship (“*Then he defines lawful worship in order to hold mankind in obedience. He combines both under his law, first when he binds believers to himself to be their sole lawgiver, and then when he prescribes a rule whereby he is to be duly honoured according to his own will.*”),¹²⁹ the suffering of the saints (“*Christ’s cross and ours: ...Why should we exempt ourselves, therefore, from the condition to which Christ our Head had to submit, especially since he submitted to it for our sake to show us an example of patience in himself?... By communion with him the very sufferings themselves not only become blessed to us but also help much in promoting our salvation.*”),¹³⁰ spiritual war (“*From this we infer that he rules—inwardly and outwardly—more for our own sake than his... These benefits, then, give us the most fruitful occasion to glory, and also provide us with confidence to struggle fearlessly against the devil, sin, and death. Finally, clothed with his righteousness, we can valiantly rise above all the world’s reproaches...*”),¹³¹ the children of God (“*Moreover, it is quite unfitting that those not engrafted into the body of the only-begotten Son are considered to have the place and rank of children.*”),¹³² the status (identity) of the Christian (“*Therefore, as soon as you become engrafted into Christ through faith, you are made a son of God, an heir of heaven, a partaker in righteousness, a possessor of life...*”),¹³³ the life (living) of the

¹²⁵ *Institutes*, 2.8.18; 2.12.7; 2.15.3; 2.15.5; 2.16.15; 3.1.4; 3.25.3; 4.1.2; 4.3.1; 4.3.2; 4.7.21; 4.7.24; 4.8.11; 4.11.2; 4.12.5; 4.12.24; 4.15.1; 4.15.15; 4.15.22; 4.17.9; 4.17.28; 4.19.35.

¹²⁶ *Institutes*, 4.14.16; 2.10.6; 4.14.7; 4.14.9; 4.14.14; 4.14.15; 4.17.2; 4.17.32; 4.19.3.

¹²⁷ *Institutes*, 4.15.6; 3.1.4; 4.14.7; 4.15.1; 4.15.5; 4.15.14; 4.15.15; 4.15.16; 4.15.22; 4.16.2; 4.16.7; 4.16.21; 4.16.22; 4.16.31; 4.17.28; 4.17.34; 4.19.8.

¹²⁸ *Institutes*, 4.17.2; 4.14.15; 4.17.1; 4.17.4; 4.17.5; 4.17.7; 4.17.8; 4.17.10; 4.17.11; 4.17.12; 4.17.13; 4.17.14; 4.17.15; 4.17.16; 4.17.18; 4.17.19; 4.17.20; 4.17.22; 4.17.24; 4.17.26; 4.17.28; 4.17.31; 4.17.33; 4.17.34; 4.17.38; 4.17.39; 4.17.40; 4.17.42; 4.17.44; 4.17.45; 4.18.7; 4.18.8; 4.18.10.

¹²⁹ *Institutes*, 1.12.1.

¹³⁰ *Institutes*, 3.8.1; 2.15.3; 3.8.7; 3.14.19; 3.15.8; 3.18.7.

¹³¹ *Institutes*, 2.15.4; 3.15.5.

¹³² *Institutes*, 2.6.1; 2.12.2; 2.13.2; 3.1.4; 3.2.13; 3.15.6; 3.16.2; 3.17.1; 3.17.5; 3.18.7; 3.20.36; 3.24.1; 3.24.5; 4.1.3; 4.15.6; 4.15.14; 4.15.22; 4.16.18.

¹³³ *Institutes*, 3.15.5; 3.15.6; 3.16.2; 3.17.1; 3.18.7; 3.20.36.

Christian (“Motives for *the Christian life*: ...*When we hear mention of our union with God*, let us remember that holiness must be its bond...”),¹³⁴ growth (“...for, as I have said, all that he possesses is nothing to us until *we grow into one body with him*.”),¹³⁵ holiness (“Likewise, “From this we know that *we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit*.” [1 John 4:13]... *and he consecrates us*, purged of worldly uncleanness, *as temples holy to God* [cf. 1 Cor. 3:16-17; 6:19; 2 cor. 6:16; Eph. 2:21].”),¹³⁶ prayer (“*The prayers in Scripture* especially show how the beginning, continuation, and end of our blessedness come from God alone: ...For this reason, in the passage already cited the apostle ascribes the sum total to him. “It is God,” says he, “*who is at work in you*, both to will and to work.” [Phil. 2:13.]”),¹³⁷ the unity of the Church, or the union of the Church (“It is not sufficient, indeed, for us to comprehend in mind and thought the multitude of the elect, unless we consider *the unity of the church* as that into which we are convinced we have been truly engrafted. For no hope of future inheritance remains to us unless *we have been united with all other members under Christ, our Head*.”),¹³⁸ the communion (*koinonia*) of the saints (“For what sharper goad could there be to arouse mutual love among us than *when Christ, giving himself to us, not only invites us by his own example to pledge and give ourselves to one another*, but inasmuch as *he makes himself common to all, also makes all of us one in himself*.”),¹³⁹ love (“Could we be aroused to love by any livelier argument than that of John’s: that “we love one another as God has loved us” [1 John 4:11; cf. John 13:34]? That herein his children differ from the devil’s children as children of light from children of darkness, *because they abide in love* [1 John 3:10; 2:10-11]? Again, with that argument of Paul’s: that we, *if we cleave to Christ, are members of one body* [1 Cor. 6:15, 17; 12:12], *who must help one another in our mutual tasks* [cf. 1 Cor. 12:25]?”),¹⁴⁰ blessing (“...thus suggesting that man was blessed, not because of his own good actions, but by participation in God.”),¹⁴¹ promise (“they had and knew Christ as Mediator, *through whom they were joined to God* and were to share in his promises.”),¹⁴² the commission of the threefold offices of Christ (or the doctrine of the office) (“Now, *Christ plays the priestly role*, not only to render the Father favourable and propitious toward us by an eternal law of reconciliation, *but also to receive us as his companions in this great office*

¹³⁴ *Institutes*, 3.6.2; 2.3.9; 3.3.2; 3.3.9; 3.3.20; 3.6.3; 3.6.4; 3.11.1; 3.11.12; 3.14.9; 3.16.2.

¹³⁵ *Institutes*, 2.3.9; 3.1.1; 3.1.2; 3.11.5; 3.24.5; 4.17.33.

¹³⁶ *Institutes*, 3.1.4; 2.8.29; 2.8.51; 3.6.2; 3.7.3; 3.11.12; 3.14.9; 3.15.5; 3.16.1; 3.16.2.

¹³⁷ *Institutes*, 2.3.9; 3.20.1; 3.20.5; 3.20.19; 3.20.20; 3.20.21; 3.20.42.

¹³⁸ *Institutes*, 4.1.2; 4.2.5; 4.2.6; 4.3.1; 4.3.2; 4.6.9; 4.6.10; 4.6.17; 4.7.21; 4.11.2.

¹³⁹ *Institutes*, 4.17.38; 3.16.2; 3.20.20; 4.17.42; 4.17.44; 4.18.7.

¹⁴⁰ *Institutes*, 3.16.2; 4.17.42; 4.17.44.

¹⁴¹ *Institutes*, 2.2.1; 1.15.6; 2.9.3; 2.11.10; 2.15.4; 2.16.7; 3.18.3; 3.25.10; 4.17.1; 4.17.4; 4.20.2.

¹⁴² *Institutes*, 2.10.2; 2.9.3; 3.1.4; 3.2.39; 4.15.16; 4.15.22.

(Rev. 1:6). For we who are defiled in ourselves, *yet are priests in him...*”,¹⁴³ and the communion with God (or Christ) (“In the Old Covenant, God gave his people *fellowship with himself* and thus eternal life: ...Still, souls, *unless they be joined to God* through righteousness, remain estranged from him in death. On the other hand, *such a union when present will bring everlasting salvation with it.*”).¹⁴⁴

Furthermore, a thematic examination of the unity of the Church also reveals that the related doctrinal themes have been dealt with as having an inter-relationship with “union with Christ” thought. Calvin emphasizes the unity of the Church in the statements that criticize the ‘hierarchy’ of the church as follows:

For Paul makes “Christ... the chief cornerstone, in whom are built those who grow into a holy temple unto the Lord” (Eph. 2:20-21 p., cf. Vg.). Peter bids us be living stones, who, laid upon that chosen and precious stone (1 Peter 2:5-6), *by this bond and juncture with our God also cleave together among ourselves* (cf. Eph. 4:16; Col. 2:19)¹⁴⁵ (own emphasis).

Christ’s headship is not transferable...For it has Christ as its sole Head, under whose sway all of us cleave to one another, according to that order and that form of polity which he has laid down... For Christ is the Head, “from whom the whole body, joined and knit together through every joint of the supply, when each part is working properly, makes bodily growth” (Eph. 4:15-16). Do you see how he includes all mortals without exception in the body, but leaves the honor and name of the Head to Christ alone?... *For the apostle teaches that the whole supply is spread through the members, and that power flows from that one heavenly Head* (Eph. 4:16)¹⁴⁶ (own emphasis).

In the same manner ‘the unity of the Church’ viewed in connection with the ‘union with the Triune God’ thought or “union with Christ” thought delivers an important theological meaning. For instance, it indicates how racial discrimination, sexual discrimination, discrimination based on status, and any other discrimination are intolerable in our Church. Furthermore, it means that the offices of serving can be distinguished according to the gift of the Holy Spirit, but no hierarchy can exist.

According to the status, we all become ‘little Christs’ as believers who have been united with Christ our Lord. The reason that we should fight against all discrimination in this

¹⁴³ *Institutes*, 2.15.6; 2.15.2; 2.15.4; 4.6.10.

¹⁴⁴ *Institutes*, 2.10.8; 3.2.24; 3.3.23; 3.5.5; 3.6.2; 3.6.4; 3.8.1; 3.11.10; 3.17.6; 3.18.1; 3.18.3; 3.24.5; 4.1.3; 4.14.7; 4.15.6; 4.16.7; 4.16.17; 4.17.7; 4.17.9; 4.17.13.

¹⁴⁵ *Institutes*, 4.6.5.

¹⁴⁶ *Institutes*, 4.6.9.

world, is this: “the unity of the Church” means the union of all the churches that have existed on this earth; even though several churches have existed with various purposes in a location, from the ultimate meaning, there has been only one Church, which is ‘for Christ, by Christ, of Christ.’

7.2.1.8. Eschatology

Lastly, in eschatology,¹⁴⁷ the “union with Christ” or ‘union with the Triune God’ thought shows an inter-connection with the following doctrinal themes: death (“By dying, he ensured that we would not die, or—which is the same thing—redeemed us to life by his own death... The apostle teaches that “*we have been united with Christ in the likeness of his death*” [Rom. 6:5, KJV], and “*buried with him... into the death*” of sin [Rom. 6:4]...”),¹⁴⁸ the resurrection (“... so we must understand that we obtain a corresponding benefit from *his resurrection*. The apostle says: “*We were engrafted in the likeness of his death, so that sharing in his resurrection we might walk in newness of life*” [Rom. 6:4 p.]”),¹⁴⁹ the ultimate victory (“He therefore sits on high, transfusing us with his power, that *he may quicken us to spiritual life, sanctify us by his Spirit*, adorn his church with divers gifts of his grace, keep it safe from all harm by his protection, restrain the raging enemies of his cross and of our salvation by the strength of his hand, and finally hold all power in heaven and on earth. *All this he does until he shall lay low all his enemies* [1 Cor. 15:25; cf. Ps. 110:1]...”),¹⁵⁰ the hope (“Hence, he arouses *hope of a full renewal* “because he who raised Christ from the dead will quicken our mortal bodies, because of *his Spirit that dwells in us*” [Rom. 8:11 p.]”),¹⁵¹ eternal life (“...*that thus ingrafted into him* (cf. Rom. 11:29) *we are already, in a manner, partakers of eternal life*, having entered in the Kingdom of God through hope.”),¹⁵² glory (“Until he comes forth as judge of the world *Christ will therefore reign, joining us to the Father* as the measure of our weakness permits. But when as partakers in *heavenly glory* we shall see God as he is, Christ, having then discharged the office of Mediator, will cease to be the ambassador of his Father, and will be satisfied with that glory which he enjoyed before

¹⁴⁷ *Institutes*, 2.16.16; 3.15.5; 3.17.6; 3.25.3; 4.17.29.

¹⁴⁸ *Institutes*, 2.16.7; 2.1.5; 2.10.8; 2.16.13; 3.18.3; 4.15.5; 4.16.17; 4.17.34.

¹⁴⁹ *Institutes*, 2.16.13; 2.10.23; 3.1.2; 3.2.39; 3.15.8; 3.25.2; 3.25.3.

¹⁵⁰ *Institutes*, 2.16.16; 2.12.3; 2.15.4; 3.22.7.

¹⁵¹ *Institutes*, 3.1.2; 2.15.3; 2.16.13; 2.16.16; 3.2.39; 3.13.5; 3.15.5; 3.20.1.

¹⁵² *Institutes*, 3.15.5; 2.10.7; 2.10.8; 2.10.23; 2.15.4; 3.2.13; 3.18.3; 4.1.2; 4.17.1; 4.17.2; 4.17.4; 4.17.8; 4.17.19; 4.17.38; 4.20.2.

the creation of the world.”),¹⁵³ the Kingdom of God (“From this we infer that *he rules—inwardly and outwardly*—more for our own sake than his... because *the Kingdom of God is within us*, it will not come with observation [Luke 17:21, 20]...”),¹⁵⁴ the Kingdom of Christ (“...But as we have just now pointed out that this kind of government is distinct from that *spiritual and inward Kingdom of Christ*, so we must know that they are not at variance. *For spiritual government, indeed, is already initiating in us upon earth certain beginnings of the Heavenly Kingdom*, and in this mortal and fleeting life affords a certain forecast of an immortal and incorruptible blessedness.”),¹⁵⁵ “already but not yet,” (“From this our faith receives many benefits. First it understands that the Lord by his ascent to heaven opened the way into the Heavenly Kingdom, which had been closed through Adam [John 14:3]. Since he entered heaven in our flesh, as if in our name, it follows, as the apostle says, that in a sense we *already “sit with God in the heavenly places in him”* [Eph. 2:6], so that we do not await heaven with a bare hope, but *in our Head already possess it*.”),¹⁵⁶ heaven (“...that believers should be convinced that their only ground of hope for *the inheritance of a Heavenly Kingdom lies in the fact that, being engrafted in the body of Christ...*”),¹⁵⁷ the second coming of Christ (“He therefore sits on high, transfusing us with his power, that *he may quicken us to spiritual life, sanctify us by his Spirit...* This is the true state of his Kingdom; this is the power that the Father has conferred upon him, until, *in coming to judge the living and the dead*, he accomplishes his final act.”),¹⁵⁸ etc.¹⁵⁹

More specifically, examination of the theological themes of the Kingdom of God (or the Kingdom of Christ), shows them to have been dealt with as having a close inter-relationship with the “union with Christ” thought. From the viewpoint of union with Christ, Calvin frequently states that the Kingdom of God has already been begun in this world and in us as believers:

But the gospel did not so supplant the entire law as to bring forward a different way of salvation. Rather, it confirmed and satisfied whatever the law had promised, and gave substance to the shadows... From this we infer that, where the whole law is concerned, the gospel differs from it only in clarity of manifestation. Still, because of the inestimable

¹⁵³ *Institutes*, 2.14.3; 2.13.2; 2.16.16.

¹⁵⁴ *Institutes*, 2.15.4; 2.9.4; 2.10.7; 3.3.19; 3.17.6; 3.20.42; 3.24.5; 4.16.17.

¹⁵⁵ *Institutes*, 4.20.2; 2.15.3; 2.15.5; 2.16.14; 3.1.2; 3.15.6; 4.17.32.

¹⁵⁶ *Institutes*, 2.16.16; 3.15.5; 3.25.2.

¹⁵⁷ *Institutes*, 3.13.5; 2.15.5; 2.16.16; 3.1.4; 3.15.5; 3.15.6; 3.16.2.

¹⁵⁸ *Institutes*, 2.16.16; 2.14.3.

¹⁵⁹ About the other inter-relationship between the “union with Christ” thought and the other doctrines in Calvin’s theology, see also the Chapter Eight of this dissertation as ‘Conclusion to Chapter Four.’

abundance of grace laid open for us *in Christ*, it is said with good reason that *through his advent God's Heavenly Kingdom was erected upon earth* (cf. Matt. 12:28)¹⁶⁰ (own emphasis).

From this our faith receives many benefits. First it understands that the Lord by his ascent to heaven opened the way into the Heavenly Kingdom, which had been closed through Adam (John 14:3). Since he entered heaven in our flesh, as if in our name, it follows, as the apostle says, that in a sense *we already "sit with God in the heavenly places in him"* (Eph. 2:6), so that we do not await heaven with a bare hope, *but in our Head already possess it...* He therefore sits on high, transfusing us with his power, that he may quicken us to spiritual life, sanctify us by his Spirit, adorn his church with divers gifts of his grace, keep it safe from all harm by his protection, restrain the raging enemies of his cross and of our salvation by the strength of his hand, and finally hold all power in heaven and on earth. All this he does until he shall lay low all his enemies (1 Cor. 15:25; cf. Ps. 110:1) (who are our enemies too) and complete the building of his church. *This is the true state of his Kingdom*; that is the power that the Father has conferred upon him, until, in coming to judge the living and the dead, he accomplishes his final act¹⁶¹ (own emphasis).

The Kingdom in which God reigns is 'the Kingdom of God.' In the same manner, Calvin emphasizes that the Kingdom of God has "already" begun in this world by the coming of Christ, who is a Person of the Triune God, into this world. Calvin also emphasizes that the Kingdom of God has already begun in us as believers from the viewpoint of "union with Christ," according to which, as I have mentioned, all of us as believers should also recognize that we are the people called with a sacred calling for the sake of the work that extends beyond the Kingdom, and that has already been begun in us, and in this world around us.

To sum up, the "union with Christ" thought has been dealt with extensively as having an inter-relationship with almost of all of the important doctrines of Christianity in the whole of the *Institutes*. On the other hand, the 'union with the Triune God' thought or "union with Christ" thought has an integrative power to bind together several disparate doctrines (for example, the doctrine of God, the doctrine of Creation, anthropology, eschatology, etc.),¹⁶² and it also bestows some important theological insights related to the thought. In other words, although the thought has been treated together with only one doctrine or one theological theme, sometimes it is dealt with as having an inter-relationship with various theological themes at the same time. From this point of view, the theological statement that the "union

¹⁶⁰ *Institutes*, 2.9.4.

¹⁶¹ *Institutes*, 2.16.16.

¹⁶² These doctrines were presented to take a practical example from Calvin's statement (*Institutes*, 2.12.6.).

with Christ” thought acts as a core ‘thought’ or as a core ‘principle’ in Calvin’s theology, has been found to be justified.

7.2.2. The Doctrinal Scope of the “Union with Christ” Thought in the *Institutes*

As I have mentioned before, the ‘union with the Triune God’ or “union with Christ” thought has been dealt with comprehensively as having a close inter-relationship with the various other doctrines (or the important theological themes) in the whole of the *Institutes*. The following comparison chart indicates the spread of distribution of the various metaphorical expressions of the “union with Christ” thought in all the books of the *Institutes*:

The <i>Institutes</i>	The Spread of Distribution of the “Union with Christ” Thought
Book One of the <i>Institutes</i>	<i>Institutes</i> , 1.2.1; 1.5.3; 1.5.5; 1.5.6; 1.5.10; 1.5.14; 1.7.4; 1.7.5; 1.8.13; 1.9.1; 1.9.2; 1.9.3; 1.12.1; 1.13.7; 1.13.14; 1.13.15; 1.13.16; 1.13.24; 1.13.26; 1.14.12; 1.14.18; 1.15.4; 1.15.5; 1.15.6; 1.18.2.
Book Two of the <i>Institutes</i>	<i>Institutes</i> , 2.1.1; 2.1.5; 2.2.1; 2.2.16; 2.2.19; 2.3.1; 2.3.6; 2.3.8; 2.3.9; 2.3.10; 2.3.11; 2.5.15; 2.6.1; 2.6.4; 2.7.11; 2.7.12; 2.8.13; 2.8.18; 2.8.23; 2.8.29; 2.8.30; 2.8.31; 2.8.34; 2.8.40; 2.8.51; 2.8.57; 2.9.3; 2.9.4; 2.10.2; 2.10.4; 2.10.7; 2.10.8; 2.10.15; 2.10.23; 2.11.10; 2.11.11; 2.12.1; 2.12.2; 2.12.3; 2.12.4; 2.12.5; 2.12.6; 2.12.7; 2.13.1; 2.13.2; 2.13.4; 2.14.3; 2.14.4; 2.14.5; 2.15.1; 2.15.2; 2.15.3; 2.15.4; 2.15.5; 2.15.6; 2.16.3; 2.16.7; 2.16.9; 2.16.13; 2.16.14; 2.16.15; 2.16.16; 2.16.19; 2.17.1; 2.17.2; 2.17.5.
Book Three of the <i>Institutes</i>	<i>Institutes</i> , 3.1.1; 3.1.2; 3.1.3; 3.1.4; 3.2.1; 3.2.6; 3.2.7; 3.2.8; 3.2.12; 3.2.13; 3.2.24; 3.2.30; 3.2.33; 3.2.34; 3.2.35; 3.2.36; 3.2.39; 3.3.1; 3.3.2; 3.3.9; 3.3.14; 3.3.19; 3.3.20; 3.3.23; 3.3.28; 3.4.20; 3.4.28; 3.5.2; 3.5.3; 3.5.5; 3.6.2; 3.6.3; 3.6.4; 3.7.1; 3.7.2; 3.7.3; 3.8.1; 3.8.7; 3.9.6; 3.11.1; 3.11.3; 3.11.4; 3.11.5; 3.11.6; 3.11.7; 3.11.8; 3.11.9; 3.11.10; 3.11.11; 3.11.12; 3.11.21; 3.11.22; 3.11.23; 3.13.5; 3.13.9; 3.13.18; 3.14.4; 3.14.6; 3.14.9; 3.14.18; 3.14.19; 3.15.5; 3.15.6; 3.15.8; 3.16.1; 3.16.2; 3.16.3; 3.17.1; 3.17.5; 3.17.6; 3.17.10; 3.17.11; 3.17.15; 3.18.1; 3.18.3; 3.18.7; 3.20.1; 3.20.5; 3.20.19; 3.20.20; 3.20.21; 3.20.29; 3.20.36; 3.20.42; 3.21.7; 3.22.1; 3.22.6; 3.22.7; 3.22.10; 3.23.14; 3.24.1; 3.24.2; 3.24.5; 3.24.6; 3.25.2; 3.25.3; 3.25.8; 3.25.10.
	<i>Institutes</i> , 4.1.2; 4.1.3; 4.1.6; 4.1.20; 4.1.21; 4.2.5; 4.2.6; 4.3.1; 4.3.2; 4.6.5; 4.6.9; 4.6.10; 4.6.17; 4.7.21; 4.7.24; 4.8.1; 4.8.11; 4.11.2; 4.12.5; 4.12.24; 4.14.7; 4.14.9; 4.14.14; 4.14.15; 4.14.16; 4.15.1; 4.15.5; 4.15.6; 4.15.14; 4.15.15; 4.15.16;

Book Four of the <i>Institutes</i>	4.15.22; 4.16.2; 4.16.7; 4.16.17; 4.16.18; 4.16.21; 4.16.22; 4.16.31; 4.17.1; 4.17.2; 4.17.3; 4.17.4; 4.17.5; 4.17.6; 4.17.7; 4.17.8; 4.17.9; 4.17.10; 4.17.11; 4.17.12; 4.17.13; 4.17.14; 4.17.15; 4.17.16; 4.17.18; 4.17.19; 4.17.20; 4.17.21; 4.17.22; 4.17.24; 4.17.26; 4.17.28; 4.17.29; 4.17.30; 4.17.31; 4.17.32; 4.17.33; 4.17.34; 4.17.38; 4.17.39; 4.17.40; 4.17.42; 4.17.44; 4.17.45; 4.18.7; 4.18.8; 4.18.10; 4.18.17; 4.19.3; 4.19.6; 4.19.8; 4.19.16; 4.19.25; 4.19.28; 4.19.35; 4.19.36; 4.20.2.
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The Comprehensiveness of the Various Metaphorical Expressions
of the “Union with Christ” thought in the *Institutes*

More specifically, in Book One of the *Institutes*, the scope of the “union with Christ” or ‘union with the Triune God’ thought has been dealt with as having an inter-relationship with the other theological themes, and occurs in ten chapters of the total 18 chapters.¹⁶³ Among these, the metaphorical expressions of the thought have been omitted as direct references only in chapters one, three, four, six, ten, eleven, sixteen, and seventeen. From the indirect viewpoint we can discover the contents related to the ‘union with the Triune God’ thought in many of these chapters as well. For example, I have already explained in chapter five that the title of Chapter One, “The Knowledge of God and That of Ourselves Are Connected. How They Are Interrelated?” already reveals a close inter-relationship with the ‘union with the Triune God’ thought, if seen from the viewpoint of the stricter meaning.

On the other hand, in *Book Two* of the *Institutes*, the scope in which “union with Christ” relates to other doctrines is 16 of the total 17 chapters. The direct metaphorical expressions of ‘union with the Triune God’ thought have been dealt with in chapter four. From this point of view, the theological recognition that deals with “union with Christ” as a doctrine subordinated to soteriology or the doctrine of the Sacrament should be changed. The various doctrines (or the various theological themes) related to anthropology, the doctrine of sin (depravity), law, the Old Testament, the New Testament, and Christology, have been treated together with the thought in Book Two of the *Institutes*.

In particular, the ‘union with the Triune God’ thought has been dealt with extensively as being closely inter-connected with the numerous theological themes (or doctrines) in *Book Three* of the *Institutes*. Its scope is 22 of the total 25 chapters. The direct metaphorical expressions of the thought are absent only in chapters ten, twelve, and nineteen. As mentioned, Calvin frequently emphasizes the “union with Christ” thought together with its importance, especially in Book Three. From this viewpoint, the location in which “union

¹⁶³ Regarding the “union with Christ” thought’s scope or its quantitative frequency in all the books of the *Institutes*, see the above comparison chart.

with Christ” thought has been exposed most abundantly in Book Three of the *Institutes*.

Lastly, the “union with Christ” thought also appears frequently in *Book Four* of the *Institutes*, where we find the scope of the “union with the Triune God” thought in inter-relationship with the other theological themes in 15 of the total 20 chapters. The thought is absent only from chapters four, five, nine, ten, and thirteen.

To sum up, the “union with Christ” thought is dealt with comprehensively as having an inter-relationship with the various other theological themes throughout the whole of the *Institutes*. If seen from this doctrinal viewpoint, we have sufficient evidence to claim that the thought has been dealt with, also in inter-connection with almost all the important doctrines that exist in the *Institutes*. From this point of view, the insistence that the “union with Christ” thought acts theologically as a core ‘thought’ or a core ‘principle’ in Calvin’s theology is now systematically verified.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Conclusion

8.1. Re-reading Calvin's Theology as a Constructive Proposal

The starting point of this dissertation has been the theological limitation arising from 'the epistemological deficiency' in Korean Reformed Theology, on the importance of Calvin's "union with Christ (*unio cum Christo*)" thought. However, this deficiency, viz. the failure to realize that the "union with Christ" thought is central to Calvin's theology (or in the New Testament), is not limited to Korean Reformed theology, resulting in a broader failure to realize that the "union with Christ" thought (or 'union with the Triune God' thought) functions as a core thought in Calvin's theology.

It is of course not that "union with Christ" has never been dealt with in Reformed Theology. In recent years, it is true that there has been attempts to deepen the understanding of the notion of "union with Christ (*unio cum Christo*), but these attempts have not engaged in comprehensive and detailed analysis. Julie Canlis puts it this way:

In Reformed scholarship, there has been of late a rise in interest in *unio cum Christo* as of a move toward recovering Calvin's original emphasis on communion and *koinōnia*. Yet even this apparently encouraging trend only underscores the pervasive flatness that lurks around interpretations of Calvin's pneumatology. William B. Evans's critique of nineteenth-century scholarship still applies: *unio cum Christo* is still "at best only a formal statement" and can still lead to radically differing interpretations within Reformed theology.¹

I completely agree to Evans and Canlis's statements that union with Christ (or participation) is still "at best only a formal statement" or "only underscores the pervasive flatness" in Reformed theology. In the same manner "union with Christ" has mostly been dealt with only as subordinated within soteriology and the doctrine of the Sacrament.

As I have mentioned, although some prominent theologians have dealt with "union

¹ Julie Canlis, *Calvin's Ladder: A Spiritual Theology of Ascent and Ascension* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2010), 154. See also William B. Evans, *Imputation and Impartation: Union with Christ in American Reformed Theology* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2008), 259.

with Christ” and applied it to Christology, Pneumatology, the doctrine of the Creation and anthropology, they still left room for a more detailed and comprehensive analysis that has a broader scope. In particular, although the research of Calvin’s theology has continued vigorously until recently in Korean Reformed theology, the theme has not received the attention it deserves. This dissertation aimed to understand this situation and to contribute constructively to this deficiency.

If seen from this point of view, theological research aiming to re-interpret the original location and scope of the “union with Christ” thought, which is dealt with in Calvin’s theology, and its theological role and importance, can be seen as an urgent task. Moreover, if we assume that Calvin’s theology still has a crucial influence on our Reformed theology, it is valid that this research, which re-evaluates “union with Christ” as a core thought of his theology, is indeed a worthwhile endeavor. If the original location, scope, form, content, theological role, various metaphorical expressions, relationship with the other theological themes, meaning, and the importance of the “union with Christ” thought are re-evaluated, the value and influence of Calvin’s theology will be exposed much more extensively, and its transformative potential can be applied to our Church.

In this conclusion I will summarize the argument and content of this dissertation briefly. This will be followed, in conclusion, with some constructive comments and evaluative remarks and practical considerations.

8.2. Korean Reformed Theology and Calvin’s “Union with Christ” Thought

From the viewpoint of the “union with Christ” thought, I researched and analyzed the inter-relationship between Calvin’s theology and Korean Reformed theology in detail in Chapter Two. In the process of the reception of Calvin theology or Calvinistic theology in Korea, the “union with Christ” thought, which is a core thought in Calvin’s theology, had been seriously reduced, as also happened elsewhere. As a result of the inheritance from the early American missionaries who passed the influence of their theology to the prominent Korean theologians of the first, second, and third generations, certain epistemological deficiencies resulted that had an impact on the reception of Reformed theologian in general, and on the reception of the notion of the “union with Christ” thought in particular.

What was then the reason that the “union with Christ” thought has been accepted in

a reductive manner in Korean Reformed theology, which in turn affected the Calvinistic theology since its formative period? Firstly, it is a result of their reliance on the secondary or tertiary indirect sources; they have rarely attempted direct research on the original primary sources of Calvin's theology.

The second reason is that Korean Reformed theology approached "union with Christ" only as a 'doctrine' merely subordinated to soteriology and the doctrine of the Sacrament since the early stages of reception, although Calvin himself had dealt with "union with Christ" comprehensively as a theological 'principle' or a 'thought' in his theology. Thirdly, the theological environment in which the early Korean Reformed theology had to depend on American Calvinistic theology possibly caused the theological limitation regarding Calvin's "union with Christ" thought.

To sum up, although the "union with Christ" thought acted as a core thought in Calvin's theology and in the New Testament, it nevertheless was accepted in a reduced manner in Korean Reformed theology, and this reduction remained operative in Calvinistic theology or Reformed theology from the early period till the present.

From this point of view, therefore, theological works that analyze and re-evaluate Korean and American Reformed theology (or Calvinistic theology) from the viewpoint of the "union with Christ" thought can bring valuable benefits not only to the Korean Church, but also to Reformed churches and theology worldwide.

8.3. American Reformed Theology and Calvin's "Union with Christ" Thought

The "union with Christ" thought has been extensively dealt with in the guise of various metaphorical expressions as a core thought throughout Calvin's entire theology. However, in Reformed theology, it often functions on the margins of theology. In particular, the epistemological absence of the importance of the "union with Christ" thought seems to be more serious in Korean Reformed theology, which has been affected by the overwhelming influence of American Reformed theology since its formation. In Chapter Three, therefore, I researched and analyzed the possible theological limitations regarding Calvin's "union with Christ" thought as it functions in American Reformed theology, which has influenced the formation of Korean Reformed theology.

We found that, from Jonathan Edwards, Samuel Hopkins, and Timothy Dwight,

who were the early American Reformed theologians, and Princeton Seminary's Archibald Alexander, Charles Hodge, Archibald Alexander Hodge, and Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield, to Louis Berkhof, John Murray, and Anthony A. Hoekema, who were 20th century theologians, all had dealt with "union with Christ" thought in their theology mostly within the confines of soteriology or the doctrine of the Sacraments.

What is then the reason that the "union with Christ" thought as a core thought of Calvin's theology was reduced in the reception process of American Reformed theology? Firstly, concerning the "union with Christ" thought, the primary original sources of Calvin's theology could have been mined more extensively.

Secondly, compared to how Calvin himself has comprehensively dealt with "union with Christ" as a theological 'thought' or 'principle' throughout his theology, the research and reception of the thought in American Reformed Theology was reduced to a 'doctrine' subordinated to soteriology or the doctrine of the Sacrament. Comprehensive research into the inter-connection of the "union with Christ" thought and Calvin's entire theology has not been attempted.

To sum up, compared to what Calvin intended with the "union with Christ" thought, as comprehensively dealt with by the various metaphorical expressions referring to various theological themes and biblical texts, in most of Reformed theology (including American Calvinistic theology) this has instead been reduced through the fact that it was limited to the reflection on a few doctrinal themes.

8.4. The Metaphorical Expressions of the Various Notions of Calvin's "Union with Christ" Thought

We can summarize Chapter Four by mentioning the following three important representative features of Calvin's "union with Christ" thought: Firstly, it has been dealt with extensively as evidenced by the wide array of metaphorical expressions of the various related notions. Practically, "union with Christ" thought is presented in more than 20 different groups of metaphorical expressions in Calvin's theology (if one focuses especially on the *Institutes*). Divided into further subdivisions, one can point to more than 150 different various metaphorical expressions.

In addition, these expressions can be divided into the broader notions: relational notions; unitive notions; other direct biblical notions; socio-cultural notions;

Pneumatological-mystical notions; substantial or real notions; effectual notions; communality notions; eschatological notions; epistemological notions; organic notions; doctrinal notions; time and spatial notions; and liturgical (or sacramental) notions. From this point of view, the variety and comprehensiveness of these metaphorical expressions become important evidence to show clearly that “union with Christ” is a central thought of Calvin’s theology.

Secondly, a feature of Calvin’s “union with Christ” thought is that it provides a balanced, integrated, and comprehensive theological emphasis. “Union with Christ,” nevertheless, focuses primarily on the dynamic theological notions, rather than the static theological notions, for “union with Christ” is not merely a speculative, abstract and subjective notion, but on the contrary, it is a substantial, real, vital and a practical notion.

To sum up, “union with Christ,” as a central thought of the Scriptures and Calvin’s theology, is similar to the astonishing power of the Gospel can verify that ‘our faith and theology’ and ‘the truths of the Scriptures’ are not nouns, but verbs. In the same manner, the theological works that re-illuminate “union with Christ” will act as a very important guide of faith to prevent a vice that threatens our belief and theology, namely to render theological in an abstract and vague mystical manner.

Thirdly, the parables of Calvin’s “union with Christ” thought have a feature that deals comprehensively with the close inter-connection of the various theological themes and the various biblical texts. In more detail, the thought involves the inter-connection in Calvin’s theology of almost every important theological theme of the Scriptures, including the following: the doctrine of the Holy Spirit’s work (or Pneumatology); the relationship between the Triune God and us; faith; repentance; the impartation of righteousness; sanctification; God’s grace; eternal life; predestination; the doctrine of the Sacrament; the doctrine of baptism; the Eucharist; Ecclesiology; the doctrine of the Scriptures; atonement; justification; union with Triune God; eschatology; the Kingdom of God (or the Kingdom of Christ); holiness; calling; the resurrection; the law; the Word; knowledge of God; Christ’s reign; reconciliation; glorification; the doctrine of the election; forgiveness of the sin; acceptance; Christology (human nature; substance); the doctrine of the Christ’s work; reason; covenant; love; the doctrine of creation; God’s mercy; Christian philosophy; the suffering of saints; the doctrine of the Triune God; the doctrine of God; Christology; regeneration; prayer; the doctrine of adoption; revelation; the perseverance of the saints; God’s image; epistemology; the doctrine of God’s providence; children of God; deed; death; holy life; the doctrine of ‘one for all;’ Christ’s presence; the ascension of Christ; Christ’s merits and grace; the theology of the Cross; the importance of “union with Christ;” the communion of the saints; the

commission of the three offices of Christ; the doctrine of the incarnation; hypostatic union; the office of mediator of Christ; the second coming of Christ; and the unity of the Church.

Conclusively, if seen from this point of view, the “union with Christ” thought has been shown to play a very important role as a central theological principle, thought, and methodology in Calvin’s theology. It functions axiomatically as a central motivational power for reform and transformation.

8.5. The Theological Meanings of Calvin’s “Union with Christ” Thought

In Chapter Five I have examined the various and important theological meanings of at least 30 implications in Calvin’s “union with Christ” thought. These theological meanings of “union with Christ” have been dealt with comprehensively throughout Calvin’s theology, together with each different metaphorical expression of the thought in at least 150 instances. Furthermore, through the theological meanings of the thought, the various theological themes have been explained, and many biblical texts have been referenced. From this point of view, the discussion of the various theological indicates that “union with Christ” functions as a central thought in Calvin’s theology. Some remarks in this regard can be made:

Firstly, the theological meanings, including ‘the union by the Holy Spirit,’ ‘Trinitarian union,’ and ‘the union through faith’ are indivisibly inter-related.

Secondly, the “union with Christ” thought can also be classified into two categories of theological meaning, as ‘the substantial union’ and ‘the spiritual union.’ These theological meanings have been also dealt with together as having an ‘indivisible’ or ‘close inter-connectedness’ in the various examined theological themes, and many biblical texts.

In summary, the “union with Christ” thought as it appears in the New Testament and Calvin’s theology, was explored in its various theological meanings, which provide us with very important theological help to understand Calvin’s theology and the New Testament more clearly. Calvin’s theology has been valuable in during a time of serious crisis and can still be an importance guide as we seek to reform the church amidst current challenges today.

8.6. Theological Structure of the “Union with Christ” Thought and the *Institutes*

In line with the proposed methodology, and in order to answer the questions

concerning the close inter-relationship between the “union with Christ” thought and Calvin’s theology, I analyzed Calvin’s original texts (or primary sources) in depth. Up to Chapter Five I indicated that the “union with Christ” thought has been dealt with multi-directionally in Calvin’s theology, indicating ‘the comprehensiveness of metaphorical expressions’ and ‘the comprehensiveness of various theological meaning.’ The resultant findings were that the “union with Christ” or ‘union with Triune God’ thought has been attended to extensively as a core ‘thought’ or ‘principle’ in Calvin’s entire theology, and specifically in the *Institutes*.

In Chapter Six I focused on the close inter-relationship between the “union with Christ” thought as a core thought of Calvin’s theology, and the *Institutes*, which is a condensed version of his theology. This analytical work on the inter-connection differs from existing analytic formulae. From the same point of view, this analytic formula also differs from the existing analytic formulae that deal with the inter-connection between the *Institutes* and the other doctrines or theological themes. In this chapter I have analyzed the theological structure of the entire books of the *Institutes* from the viewpoint of the “union with Christ” thought. As a result, it was verified that there is a close inter-relationship between the structures of the *Institutes* and the “union with Christ” thought. If seen from a more detailed viewpoint, the close inter-relationship can be summarized as follows:

Firstly, the *Institutes*, a condensed version of Calvin’s theology, was composed with a ‘theological two-fold structure of Triune God and ourselves,’ which is very closely related to the “union with Christ” thought. This argument was verified through Calvin’s repeated statements and the detailed analyses of the main contents, the titles, and the structure of each clause and chapter of the whole of the *Institutes*. From this point of view, the ‘theological two-fold structure of Triune God and ourselves’ was a decisive reason for dealing thoroughly with the “union with Christ” thought in Calvin’s entire theological works, together with the various theological themes.

Secondly, the structure, content, and scope of the *Institutes* are not only very closely related to the “union with Christ” thought, but also to the ‘union with Triune God’ thought. In fact, these two thoughts are used interchangeably in the Scriptures and in Calvin’s theology, with a high rate of frequency. The inter-relationship between the structure and scope of the *Institutes* and ‘union with Triune God’ thought results partly from Calvin’s development of his theology along these lines of ‘the theological two-fold form of the Triune God and ourselves.’

In summary, ‘union with Triune God’ thought or “union with Christ” thought is a core thought of Calvin’s theology, closely related to the structure of the *Institutes*.

Consequently, this is of crucial importance, because, as Calvin interpreted the various theological themes and the texts of the Scriptures by the “union with Christ” thought, we can also use the thought as a ‘theological methodology’ or an ‘exegetic tool.’ In particular, if Calvin’s theology had been valuable during the time of the Reformation, the rediscovery or reapplication of the ‘union with Triune God’ thought might certainly still yield much fruit today.

8.7. The Doctrinal Scope of the “Union with Christ” Thought in Calvin’s Theology

In chapter 7 I attended to the inter-relationship between the “union with Christ” thought and the various doctrines that are found in Calvin’s theology (or, more specifically, the *Institutes*). I examined mainly the scope of the doctrines (or theological themes) that show an inter-relationship with the ‘union with the Triune God’ thought, the importance of the thought, and its role as a core thought. The results verified that the ‘union with the Triune God’ or “union with Christ” thought has been dealt with not only as having a close inter-connectedness with a *doctrine* subordinated to soteriology, but also with “the plurality of themes that imposed themselves simultaneously,” namely, the various other doctrines in Calvin’s theology. On the other hand, it was also discovered that the thought operates as a core *thought* in Calvin’s theology.

Moreover, I examined the emphasis on the importance of “union with Christ” that has been ceaselessly presented by Calvin himself and by other theologians who have researched his theology. It was proven that the importance of the union has been emphasized in detail in largely three aspects: Firstly, the importance of the thought in soteriology; secondly, the importance of the thought as a core element of the gospel; and thirdly, its importance as a central and comprehensive thought. Through these research analyses, it was verified that the “union with Christ” thought is located at the heart of Calvin’s entire theology.

I also provided evidence for the argument that the “union with Christ” thought (or ‘union with the Triune God’ thought) has an inter-relationship with the various other doctrines (or theological themes), of which there are more than 80 in the *Institutes*. At the same time, the doctrinal scope of the thought in the *Institutes* was also presented in more detail in Chapter Seven. It was further verified that the ‘union with the Triune God’ thought

has played a role as a ‘core thought’ in Calvin’s theology and is inter-connected to various other doctrines.

To sum up, through the various doctrines and theological themes that have been dealt with from the viewpoint of the “union with Christ” thought in Calvin’s theology, we are able to infer that ‘the thought plays a role as a very important theological methodology in Christian theology.’

8.8. Evaluative and Constructive Comments

The life of the church and the lives of believers are connected with our Lord Jesus Christ in faith by the Holy Spirit: this is the core idea of the “union with Christ” thought. I have previously emphasized that ‘this thought means the mutual immanence between Christ and us.’ That is, the life of “mystical union (*unio mystica*)” – that Christ dwells in us through the Holy Spirit and that we also live in Christ by faith – is the core content of the “union with Christ” thought. Thus, the “union with Christ” thought has a close inter-relationship with our Christian identity, the essence of the Church, and the various other important doctrines of Christianity. Therefore, it carries great value, helping us to reinterpret or re-evaluate our Christian identity, the various doctrines, the contents of the Gospel, biblical texts, and the various theological themes.

From this point of view, I want to make a few evaluative and constructive comments: Firstly, the “union with Christ” or ‘union with the Triune God’ thought is located in an important relationship with the present and the future of our Reformed theology’s development, for it is a core thought of Calvin’s theology. At the same time, Calvin’s theology still exerts substantial theological influence on our Reformed theology in the present time. Therefore, the theological work that re-evaluates, reinterprets and reapplies “union with Christ” can offer valuable insights to the present and the future development of Reformed theology.

Secondly, understanding the various metaphorical expressions of this thought and its meanings will also help our Christian lives to re-discover important aspects of the biblical witness. As a biblical-centric thinker, moreover, Calvin has attended to the close inter-relationship of this thought, to the various theological themes and numerous biblical texts. Hence also our understanding of the Scriptures can be enriched.

Thirdly, and closely connected to the previous two evaluations, is, that in a practical manner, the ‘union with the Triune God’ or “union with Christ” thought can be applied to our

theology as a ‘theological principle,’ ‘theological methodology,’ and ‘interpretative tool,’ since theological interpretation is connected directly to our Church and Christian life; undoubtedly the direction of our faith is determined by how we interpret theology and the Scriptures. From this point of view, this core thought of Calvin’s theology has been the catalyst of the Reformation of the Church as a theological principle, and remains valuable to our Church today.

Fourthly, it is also necessary to re-evaluate the biblical commentaries of Calvin from the viewpoint of “union with Christ.” Although I have also touched on the thought in Calvin's biblical commentaries this represents only a small section of this dissertation, for it was impossible to deal with all of them on account of limited space, and also because of the scope of research. However, in Chapter Four the thought was examined in terms of its having some important meanings also in the biblical commentaries. Extensive research that re-evaluates and reinterprets the biblical commentaries from this point of view might offers further insights to understanding and interpreting not only Calvin’s theology, but also the whole of Scripture.

8.9. Towards the Practical Application of the “Union with Christ” Thought

I have frequently emphasized that the “union with Christ” thought can be applied practically, not only with regard to our Christian identity, but also in our theological and pastoral task of re-interpreting the various doctrines of our Church, the contents of the Gospel, biblical texts, and various theological themes. This would require the following efforts: Firstly, more systematical research of the ‘union with the Triune God’ or “union with Christ” thought is necessary. Although research related to the “union with Christ” has increased considerably during the last few decades, there is still a need for further investigation, using this central thought as a ‘theological principle,’ ‘theological methodology,’ and ‘an interpretative tool’ within a larger frame.

Secondly, it is necessary to recognize the importance of ‘union with the Triune God’ or “union with Christ” not merely for reflections on doctrine and theology, but also to think through its implication for preaching, worship and theological educations. Although this task falls beyond the scope of this dissertation, it is our belief that the argument and content of this dissertation can be helpful in such as a task. Admittedly, the importance of ‘Christ

dwelling in us through the Holy Spirit, and us living in Christ by faith;’ that is, ‘living in union with Christ’ has enjoyed much educational exposure in our Church until the present time; nevertheless, there are few examples of practical application of the thought as a ‘principle’ or ‘methodology,’ together with the more obvious understanding through biblical and theological systematic research. Practical applications that recognize the importance of the thought, researches the thought, and emphasizes it in the field of our beliefs and practices, are urgently necessary.

Lastly, teaching material related to “union with Christ” is desperately needed. Despite the frequent publications in recent years of theology books related to “union with Christ,” we need more practical and course orientated study material. The fact that “union with Christ,” which is a core thought of Calvin’s theology and the New Testament, has been dealt with only as a doctrine subordinated to soteriology and the doctrine of the Sacrament, is a great loss to our Church, for this thought is closely connected to numerous texts of the Scriptures. Moreover, the thought is also a ‘theological principle’ that has a close inter-relationship with other important theological themes (or doctrines), with practical and moral application for the Christian life.

In particular, Calvin’s theology had been of valuable use to reform the Church of his day that had been on the verge of deterioration. When seen from this point of view, systematic research and practical application of the “union with Christ” thought also hold promise to contribute to the continuing reformation of Reformed churches in Korea, and worldwide.

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